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The Gift of Mortality *Anna Mathie*

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C.S. LEWIS AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Joseph Pearce

There are many Protestants and Catholics who have been deeply affected and spirituality changed by the writings of C.S. Lewis, including many converts to Catholicism who credit C.S. Lewis for playing a significant role in their conversion. But the ironic and perplexing fact is that Lewis himself, while "Catholic" in many aspects of his faith and devotion, never became a Roman Catholic. Many have wondered why.

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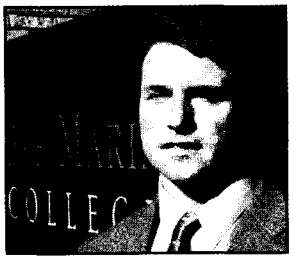

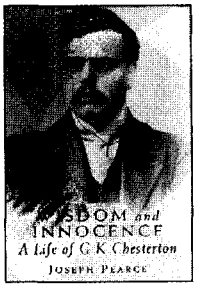

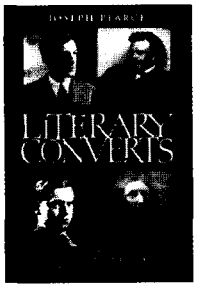

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Harsh Realities or Handy Myths?

In "The Women of *Roe v. Wade*" (June/July) Mary Ann Glendon's description of the historical and legal context in which *Roe v. Wade* occurred omits an important part of that context. There were many abortions in the United States—both legal and illegal—long before *Roe v. Wade* and they were known by, and of significance to, men as well as women.

In the January 1964 issue of the *ABA Journal*, Zad Leavy and Jerome Kummer published "Criminal Abortion: A Failure of the Law." They argued that the laws of abortion in the United States and throughout the Western world primarily profess to safeguard the prospective mother but by their severity drive large numbers of desperate women into the hands of the unskilled criminal abortionist. They estimated one million or more illegal abortions in the U.S. each year with five thousand to ten thousand deaths as a direct consequence. Their article was something of a pre-statement of the majority and concurring opinions in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*.

Here in the city of St. Louis anecdotal evidence is that there were many illegal abortions but that prosecutions, in the words of a Circuit (prosecuting) Attorney of the early 1960s, "were few and far between." Prosecution followed only an "abortion gone wrong," that is, when the woman had to enter the hospital. The police were simply not referring illegal abortions to the Circuit Attorney.

Glendon comments that "when reading *Roe* and *Doe*, it is surprising to see how little [the decisions] have to say about protecting women and how much they have to do with protecting doctors."

The century-old statutes criminalizing abortion except to save the life of the mother did not threaten the woman who procured an abortion with criminal action; only the providers of the abortion fell within the prohibition. The same was true of the statutes adding the health exception.

The 1973 decisions described a preexisting seriously chaotic condition of the laws criminalizing abortions affecting large numbers (likely millions) of human beings. If one is inclined to translate moral standards into laws, the question arises whether the laws in the United States criminalizing abortion were being enforced and, more serious, whether these laws were enforceable. I take it we are all agreed that laws that are not enforceable are not just.

Professor Glendon expresses hope for the future. If her hopes include a reversal of *Roe v. Wade* or a constitutional amendment prohibiting abortion, she should be careful what she hopes for. The chaotic legal and human conditions of the 1960s and earlier may return and everyone, even those who then did not recognize these conditions for what they were, would be fully aware of them.

James F. McCarthy
St. Louis, Missouri

Among the many excellent qualities of Mary Ann Glendon is her candor. In speaking of a "mating market," she identifies an important truth that is too often denied or suppressed—namely, that the search for romantic companionship involves factors of supply and demand that lend themselves to economic reasoning.

Professor Glendon notes what we might describe as the macroeconomic impact of the baby boom, which created a de facto surplus of 1.7 mil-

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lion marriageable young women in the mid-1960s. As any economist would predict, this imbalance caused women to engage in a social version of "discounting," e.g., acquiescing to pressure for premarital sex, tolerating abusive behavior by men, or "marrying down." Similarly, eligible men who found a surfeit of desirable women competing for their interest might well become excessively picky, expecting women to live up to unrealistic ideals, whether those ideals were traditional ("Ozzie and Harriet") or hedonistic (the *Playboy* centerfold).

One of the hindrances to understanding the forces that influence romantic behavior—either in the macro- or microeconomic sphere—is that many people strongly deny even the existence of the "mating market." Much of this resistance is feminist in nature: women feel insulted to think of themselves as commodities (supply) in a market where men are generally viewed as consumers (demand). But much of the resistance comes from hyper-individualistic idealism, the insistence that each of us is so unique and self-determining as to be utterly independent of any social influence.

Prof. Glendon is to be congratulated for her recognition that the mystery of romance can be at least partially demystified through the application of market models.

Robert Stacey McClain
Gaithersburg, Maryland

Mary Ann Glendon replies:
James F. McCarthy's letter shows how difficult it has been to dispel three myths that have clouded rational discussion of the abortion question in this country.

Myth No. 1: The incidence of abortion, legal and illegal, was very high prior to *Roe v. Wade*. The estimate in the *ABA Journal* article cited by Mr. McCarthy was based exclusively on the notoriously unreliable figures of Alfred Kinsey, which have been specifically rejected as unsubstantiated by Planned Parenthood itself. For years, however, pro-abortion activists have insisted that illegal abortions were responsible for five to ten thousand deaths a year. As Dr. Bernard Nathanson, a founder of the predecessor organization to the National Abortion Rights Action League, later admitted, "I confess that I knew the figures were totally false . . . but it was a useful figure, widely accepted, so why go out of our way to correct it with honest statistics. The overriding concern was to get the laws eliminated, and anything within reason which had to be done was permissible." There have been a number of subsequent, careful analyses, separating fact from fiction, concluding that abortion rates did rise significantly after *Roe* and pointing out that women have been insufficiently informed of safety and health issues involved in legal abortions. See, for example, Clarke D. Forsythe's article "The Effective Enforcement of Abortion Law Before *Roe v. Wade*," in *The Silent Subject: Reflections on the Unborn in American Culture*.

Myth No. 2: The abortion decisions were mainly about criminal penalties for abortion. As emphasized in my article, what made the U.S. abortion decisions far more extreme than abortion legislation in most other liberal democracies is that *Doe v. Bolton* and subsequent cases invalidated even modest noncriminal regulations designed to provide women with full information and to establish a review process that would at least protect healthy unborn children capable of surviving outside the mother's body. To this day, abortion advocates resist the imposition of any restrictions on the abortion license issued by the Supreme Court in 1973.

Myth No. 3: To return the abortion question to states to be resolved by the ordinary processes of bargaining, education, persuasion, and voting would invite legal chaos. Far from producing chaos, the decisions of European countries to leave most aspects of the regulation of abortion up to the elected representatives of the people have produced laws that are more protective of unborn life, more respectful of women's intelligence and autonomy, and more conducive to democratic decision-making than the U.S. Supreme Court's decisions from *Roe* and *Doe* onward. Even pro-choice Europeans are shocked by what is arguably the most extreme of these decisions, *Steinberg v. Carhart* (2000), which struck down a legislative ban on partial-birth abortion.

Lives of Pi

Randy Boyagoda's review of Yann Martel's *The Life of Pi* (May) demotes the book that last year received England's most coveted literary award to the level of a religious tract.

Whether the function of literature is to edify, flex the imagination, or both is debatable, but I cannot share Mr. Boyagoda's confidence that Martel intended his Pi to preach. I am no more a fan of postmodernity's infatuation with undecidability than Mr. Boyagoda is, but every great novel and poem is textured by multivalent levels of meaning and I see Martel deploying this device with great artistry. I closed his book unsure if Pi ends his narrative thinking that there actually was a tiger in his lifeboat or that what he has described is the long delirium his dire straits plunged him into until he was rescued. Which by my lights is exactly where Martel intends to leave his readers.

As for the religious syncretism that Mr. Boyagoda targets as the book's message—does it have a message?—it is no more than finger work, but even there Martel understands India better than Mr. Boyagoda does. When the Pope visited India several years back and a Western reporter asked an Indian why Hindus and Muslims were turning out in such

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numbers to welcome a Catholic pope, the man replied, "We Indians believe everything."

Huston Smith
Berkeley, California

Randy Boyagoda replies:
Huston Smith provides three points to consider regarding the success, nature, and message of Yann Martel's novel.

I think he invests too much in Martel's novel winning "England's most coveted literary award" last year as a sign of the work's quality. Some have contended that the choice was less a reflection of Martel's aesthetic achievement and more a rejoinder to those who accuse the Booker Prize people of keeping, of late, to a rather closed and predictable set of tastes—Atwood, Swift, Ondaatje, MacEwan, etc.

Mr. Smith's second point is that there is a profound difference between "postmodernity's infatuation with undecidability" and the "multivalent levels of meaning" that characterize a masterwork of literature. I agree altogether with this distinction, but in comparison with other twentieth-century authors who write on the fine line between playful doubt and productive ambiguity—Raymond Quineau, Italo Calvino, Jorge Luis Borges, and above all others, Flannery O'Connor—I cannot place Martel on the side of the great postmodernists as based upon the belief games that arise in *Life of Pi*. Martel's novel lacks the epistemological depths and narrative structures that O'Connor et al. demonstrate are necessary to bring forth multiple meanings from single moments.

Finally, there is the matter of the importance of religion to the novel's overall meaning. Finding serious flaws in Martel's approach does not demote the novel into "a religious tract," as Mr. Smith complains I do, but, rather, seeks to indicate the high stakes that arise when a novel sets out with a profound ambition—to make us believe in God. As for my understanding of religion in India, by no means do I present myself as an expert in this area. A scholar of Mr. Smith's stature has a much deeper grasp of religion than I or perhaps Martel for that matter; it is unfortunate he chose to base his closing argument upon a throwaway line from a news report. But to clarify my position: I find fault with Martel's approach to religion in India for two reasons. First, he provides a myopic rendering of interreligious dialogue—see especially the mawkish meeting between Pi's religious teachers early in the novel. Second, through the actions of his protagonist, Martel too playfully unhinges religious components from various faiths and then mixes them into a personalized celebration of misty spirituality that seems a far cry from authentic syncretism.

Impressions of Hume

It is certainly perspicacious to link David Hume with Jane Austen, as does Rodney Delasanta in his article "Hume, Austen, and First Impressions" (June/July). While their lives overlapped for only one year, they were both masters of clear, witty insight, and they both wrote in a brilliant lapidary English.

Unfortunately, Professor Delasanta's central thesis about "impressions" is flawed. He notes that according to Hume, impressions are strong and vivid, while ideas derived from them are "feeble." In contrast Austen portrays central characters who have mistaken first impressions about others. On the surface this would seem to involve contradictory views about the status of impressions.

But there really is no conflict of opinion here, because the two writers used the term "impression" in two completely different senses. Hume used the term to refer to immediate sense experience. Austen used the term, not as a technical epistemological expression, but rather in the commonsense meaning of early uncritical judgment, as for example when I might say, "I thought Jones was mean because of the first impression I had of him when he had a sour expression on his face, but I soon learned that he was friendly and generous."

Charles Evans
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New York, New York

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single interpretation of any great philosopher must be in want of correction. Although the marriage of literary and philosophical criticism in Rodney Delasanta's "Hume, Austen, and First Impressions" is welcome, his interpretation of Hume makes the mistake that plagues many of Austen's characters: it is a caricature of a character, based on misleading "first impressions."

Professor Delasanta suggests that Austen subtly refutes Hume's "radical skepticism" in her novels, which appeal to the viability and necessity of universal ideas and each tell in their own way against the pitfalls of believing in first impressions. Austen, says Prof. Delasanta, inverts Hume's ordering of perceptions, which gives impressions pride of place and makes ideas their woefully inferior children. This is a bizarre interpretation of Hume, who spent a lifetime examining and disseminating ideas. Although Hume says in the *Enquiry* that "the most lively thought is still inferior to the dullest sensation," context and charity make it clear that he refers here only to the phenomenological vivacity of impressions over ideas, not to any qualitative ordering, as Prof. Delasanta would have us believe.

Indeed, since Hume explains in the *Treatise* that there is *no* qualitative distinction between impressions and ideas, he certainly cannot mean that impressions are qualitatively superior

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to their less lively counterparts. The most fundamental Humean mechanisms which forward the intercourse of human sentiments would utterly fail without the contribution of ideas: we must have an idea of someone else's suffering or joy before sympathy can enliven it into an impression, and the mechanism that produces the sort of pride that Hume finds so important is a double relation of impressions and ideas.

Prof. Delasanta's real concern about Hume's apparent dismissal of ideas involves Hume's alleged rejection of "metaphysical realism." Prof. Delasanta gets to this charge by way of Hume's critique of certain theories of universals, which supposedly leads to "radical skepticism." Radical skepticism and radical empiricism are of course not the same, although Prof. Delasanta seems to use the terms interchangeably. Nor does suspicion about metaphysical universals necessarily entail either. There are a number of philosophical positions to adopt here, and many philosophers confident in humanity's ability to seek knowledge have counted themselves as empiricists and even nominalists.

But what is peculiarly problematic about calling Hume a radical skeptic is that the philosopher himself repeatedly considers and rejects Pyrrhonism, calling it "*excessive* skepticism" in the *Enquiry* and classing it as a kind of insanity in the *Treatise*. It is not insignificant that Hume's long discussions of skepticism come at the end of the first book of the *Treatise* and in the first *Enquiry*, before Hume's discussion of the passions and morals. As scholars such as Annette Baier have taught us, we cannot learn from Hume if we ignore the structure of his whole texts. He dismisses popular objections to moral evidence as "weak" and openly ridicules the Pyrrhonist, whose principles, "as soon as they leave the shade, and by the presence of the real objects which actuate our passions and sentiments, are put in opposition to the more powerful principles of our nature . . . vanish like smoke, and leave the most determined skeptic in the same condition as other mortals."

Hume's proposed mitigated skepticism is unlikely to satisfy Prof. Delasanta's desire for hard universals and metaphysical realism. Nor is Hume's greater confidence in morals than in monads likely to charm such a critic. But then we must question how exactly Austen is meant to be the strong anti-Humean that Prof. Delasanta portrays. What evidence is it against Hume's theory of morals or the passions that Darcy and Elizabeth Bennett are mistaken about one another for so long? What argument is given for conceiving of their enlightenment about each other as a "process of intellection" of a sort that Hume would reject? Surely Prof. Delasanta does not mean to suggest (although he surely does suggest) that Hume does not recognize the necessity and possibility of correcting one's first impressions of another's character. Just as we are not born with a fine-tuned appreciation for difficult music, neither are we born with the discernment needed to distinguish honorable from dishonorable characters. We must develop a standard of taste. And even if we have a fairly well-developed moral sense, we may certainly be misled by our tendency to sympathize more strongly with those closer to us in station—the impoverished Wickham rather than the wealthy Darcy, for example.

So Hume introduces the notion of the *general point of view* as a corrective to such tendencies. When Elizabeth reads Darcy's letter pleading his case, her shame and humiliation are captured in a lament full of terms Hume would happily admit into philosophical discussion and moral argument—discernment, generosity, candor, vanity, folly, pleasure, ignorance, and yes, even reason. Hume is happy to admit the common use of the word "reason" and its usefulness in precisely such cases. Elizabeth concludes by saying, "Till this moment, I never knew myself," and there would be no reason for Hume to disagree.

Moreover, the first line of *Pride and Prejudice*, which is surely sarcasm all the way down, cannot seriously be taken as evidence for any metaphysical view. (Which character, after all, could have uttered such a sentence in all seriousness? Only Mrs. Bennett, to be sure.) Hume's appeals to universal acknowledgement of various truths about human nature, however, are clearly meant to support his own arguments and cannot be dismissed as an attempt to philosophize by taking an opinion poll.

Prof. Delasanta acknowledges that he is in danger of "reducing the complexity and humanity of Hume's thought," but he does not seem to take this danger as seriously as his thesis warrants. The effort and time Hume spent writing on ethical and political matters is ample evidence that Hume took such matters seriously, despite his metaphysical doubts. And yes, Austen surely would have quarreled with Hume's religious views, and rightly so. But the charge that Hume errs in focusing on morals and manners rather than metaphysical doctrines would seem odd in the voice of such a novelist. The voice of one of her most admirable characters in *Northanger Abbey*, Eleanor Tilney, sounds far more Austenian when she instructs her young friend on the pleasures of the day's histories: "If a speech be well drawn up, I read it with pleasure, by whomsoever it may be made—and probably with much greater, if the production of Mr. Hume or Mr. Robertson, than if the genuine words of Caractacus, Agricola, or Alfred the Great."

Margaret Watkins Tate
Department of Philosophy
Baylor University
Waco, Texas

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Rodney Delasanta replies:

I am well aware that when an idea is *essayed* (in Montaigne's sense of the word) an *assay* will soon follow. Professors Evans and Tate have made compelling assay of my essay connecting Jane Austen's first impressions back to David Hume's. Their responses make epistemological distinctions, largely dependent on evidence from his *Treatise of Human Nature*, that I did not entertain.

But if I am right in assuming that Austen was disconcerted by Hume's radical empiricism, then she would have responded more as a novelist than as a philosopher. Philosophy can clip the angel's wings, as Keats wrote, and any work of fiction that contends with ideas as complex and threatening to the metaphysical and religious order as were David Hume's must start out by simplifying the target. Could any novelist have negotiated the entire *Treatise*, which, as Hume himself lamented, "fell dead-born from the press"? More likely would Austen have been familiar, and taken issue, with his later, better-known *Enquiries*, which recast the original three-volume treatise and which, one might add, made the heterodox singularity of his ideas more vulnerable to riposte. Prof. Tate talks about my caricaturing of Austen's characters, but in a sense any fiction that takes on a philosophical adversary must of necessity entertain some degree of caricature. Voltaire did so, unfairly, to Leibniz in *Candide* and Melville did it more deftly to Emerson in *The Confidence Man*, but in both cases and in many others the novelist could not have proceeded except by way of *reductio*. So too the dramatist. Consider what Aristophanes did to Socrates in *The Clouds*.

But let us keep our eyes squarely on the obvious. What would an observant Christian novelist like Jane Austen, the faithful daughter of an Anglican divine, have found objectionable in Hume? The same, I submit, that made Hume's ideas exceptionable to a Christian like Samuel Johnson—or even to a quondam pietist Christian like Immanuel Kant, who, though profoundly influenced by Hume, took great pains to ameliorate the devastating implications of his epistemology. Prof. Tate bypasses my contention that Hume's epistemological theories, which limited truth to what can be known only by the senses (that is, by impressions), effectively decommissioned metaphysics. Did not an admirer like Kant himself recognize that if Hume was right in his epistemology, philosophers could no longer ask the perennial philosophical questions? Hume's was an epistemology with an agenda: it is not adventitious to his thought that he should have consigned books of metaphysics and theology to the flames.

While one should deplore the heavy-handed censorship that made the *Index of Forbidden Books* so opprobrious, no one can wonder why the censors found Hume a prime candidate for that infamous canon. If one prefers to describe his skepticism as "mitigated" rather than radical, so be it, but the effects of that mitigated skepticism on both metaphysics and religion remain radical—whatever the endorsed adjective. Hume was scornful of Christianity, and although his scorn found more gentlemanly articulation than did, say, Voltaire's, he used his brilliance to undermine any support that metaphysics could offer it. Even in extremis his antipathy remained constant. Is there anything sadder (to a Christian at least) than Adam Smith's account of Hume's final illness, during which, despite his imperturbable gaiety in the face of death, the only prayer the great philosopher allowed himself was a fanciful petition to Charon the boatman that he be allowed more time to correct a new edition of his works or—tellingly—that he be granted "the satisfaction *of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition*" (emphasis added)? How bravely did he face the imminence of death, but how devoid was that moment of even a shard of Christian consolation.

Is Open Too Open?

In his critical discussion of the open view of God ("What God Knows," June/July), Timothy George maintains that evangelicals have become so accustomed to reading the Bible "in exegetical isolation from the gathered wisdom of the fathers, the schoolmen, and the reformers" that they have become "vulnerable to all kinds of aberrant ideas with alleged biblical support." Those familiar with the writings of open theists know that they are *not* guilty of ignoring the tradition's "gathered wisdom." The recently published exchange of letters between Christopher Hall and John Sanders titled *Does God Have a Future?* would help to dispel this notion. Sanders, who presses the case for the open view, has a thorough grasp of and respect for church tradition.

The larger issue is the role that church tradition should play in our thinking about God. The same tradition that Prof. George cites as supporting God's knowledge of future contingents also supports divine impassibility, the idea that God is unaffected by what goes on in the created order. Prof. George applauds open theists for emphasizing God's interactions with His creatures. But this is tantamount to rejecting the "gathered wisdom" of the tradition. To be sure, some theologians recognized the tension between the doctrine of divine impassibility and the biblical portrait of a loving creator. Anselm puzzled over how God could be compassionate but feel no sympathy for His creatures. He concluded that God is compassionate in terms of our experience but not in terms of His being. Is it incumbent on evangelicals to accept this solution, which

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became standard in the tradition? Or may one attribute to God *felt compassion* as opposed to mere *acts of benevolence*?

The appeal to the "gathered wisdom" of the tradition is no substitute for argument. Thomas Aquinas understood Aristotle's reason for not attributing knowledge of the world to the unmoved mover. If God knows the world then God must be affected by the world, but Thomas was firmly committed to divine impassibility. In a brilliant but questionable move, he inverted the cognitive relation in God—God knows the world in virtue of being its primary cause. Again, that is part of the tradition. Open theists, following process theists, insist on the difficulties the Thomistic solution poses for human freedom. They advocate instead a view of the future as yet to be fully created, as genuinely open even for God. This does not yield, as Prof. George avers, a "seminiscient deity," only a deity that knows all that it is possible to know (surely the core meaning of omniscience).

Open theists concede that theirs is an extreme minority view in the tradition and they accept the burden of proof this puts on them. They believe, however, that they have met the burden by retaining what is essential to the tradition (i.e., a loving, all-knowing, and providential creator) in a way that is more coherent than the views of their predecessors and that makes better overall sense of the biblical witness. It is conceivable that future evangelicals will regard open theists as arguing from a shallower tradition to a more profound one. This possibility should be reason enough to treat open theists with charity and to extend to them the same courtesy in controversy that one expects for oneself—here, at least, Prof. George and I are in agreement.

Donald Wayne Viney
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Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, Kansas

Timothy George focuses on philosophical consistency and biblical hermeneutics in his case against open theism. But open theism also gets the history of philosophy wrong, and it is time for critics of open theism to stop being complicit in their mistake. Professor George calls the Aristotelian God "static," a word usually used to describe physical things in a passive state of rest, implying the absence of activity. But Aristotle's insistence that God is unchanging follows from the requirement that God is pure actuality. Aristotle's further description of the prime mover as "thought thinking itself" is not meant to describe an attitude of disinterest, but a life of perfect activity. (Hence it is also misleading for Prof. George to call Aristotle's God "loveless." Aristotle describes God, the ultimate Good, as the ultimate object of love, and as an activity that is identical with that object. In other words, God loves, and God is love.)

It is true that it is hard for us to comprehend a perfect activity which is always wholly fulfilling its purpose—and so "at rest" and "unchanging." But if we wish to make claims about the notion of God in Greek metaphysics, and about the tradition of Christian theology which has made use of that notion, we are going to have to make the effort to understand Aristotle. A first step would be to stop calling Aristotle's God "static."

Joshua P. Hochschild
Department of Philosophy
Wheaton College
Wheaton, Illinois

In his article "What God Knows," Timothy George argues against the open theist point of view concerning God's knowledge of the future, or lack thereof. The open theist's argument rests on a syllogism to the effect that 1) God cannot be wrong, 2) God knows the future, 3) Therefore God's knowledge of the future cannot be wrong and a human cannot make an alternative choice, because to do so would be to prove God's knowledge of the future wrong. Therefore the open theist logically argues that God does not know the future and keeps free will intact. Professor George's argument is that Harry Emerson Fosdick wrote a hymn to the effect that free will and exhaustive foreknowledge are not exclusive. I was wondering if it would be possible to obtain a more convincing argument than one built from authority and nothing more.

Michael Rennier
St. Charles, Missouri

Timothy George replies:
Professor Donald Wayne Viney chides me for giving too much credence to church tradition and for applying it inconsistently with reference to divine foreknowledge and divine impassibility. First, let me say that I do not believe that all traditions are created equal. As a convinced Baptist, I think that large sectors of the Christian tradition have been wrong about the practice of infant baptism for a long time. But the nature and character of the God confessed at baptism is a more pressing issue in the hierarchy of truth. To deny God's complete knowledge of the future is a serious departure from the *depositum fidei*, as taught by Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox theologians through the centuries, and should not be undertaken lightly—certainly not without more convincing arguments than process theologians and open theists have thus far advanced on its behalf. I am familiar with the Hall-Sanders exchange and see it as evidence for the point I have just made.

But what about impassibility? Again, confusion arises from a failure to see how this term has functioned in the history of theology. True enough, the language of impassibility is deeply embedded in patristic theology going back to Ignatius of Antioch. But, as G. L.

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Prestige has shown, *apatheia* as a divine attribute was understood by the early fathers to undergird God's indefectible stability (Barth uses the word "constancy") and perfect moral freedom. "It is clear that impassibility means not that God is inactive or uninterested, not that he surveys existence with Epicurean impassivity from the shelter of a metaphysical insulation, but that His will is determined from within instead of being swayed from without." Understood in this sense, divine impassibility is no barrier to God's self-giving love, but rather a guarantee that the God of the Bible is not like the fallible, mutable, passion-driven deities of the ancient world. Thus the Alexandrian school of Christology could say, in the language of paradox, "he suffered impassibly," and Gregory of Nazianzus, long before Luther, could speak of "a God hanging on a cross." As Geoffrey Wainwright has noted, "Modern theologians with deistic or unitarian tendencies will obviously be unhappy" with such language, but it is the language of both Catholic liturgy and evangelical piety ("And can it be that thou my God shouldst die for me?"—Charles Wesley).

Now *apatheia* is not a biblical word and it may well be that, given the meaning this term has assumed in a post-Cartesian world, we should no longer apply it to God. But that is a different move than the radical revisioning of the doctrine of God attempted by process and openist thinkers. The God Augustine describes in his *Confessions*—creating, loving, supporting, filling, protecting, nurturing—is "impassible" in the historic sense but not unresponsive or "unaffected" by the world He has made. Rather, He is "unchangeable, yet changing all things, never new, never old, making all things new, yet bringing old age upon the proud, and they know it not; always working, ever at rest; gathering, yet needing nothing." Only by denying this "yet . . . never . . . ever . . . yet" aspect do we get the caricatured deity of deism against which open theism (rightly) reacts with disdain.

Prof. Joshua P. Hochschild thinks that we should enlist Aristotle to help prove that open theism is not only theologically aberrant but also philosophically askew. Fine with me. But Christian theologians who drink Aristotle straight do so at their own peril. Even St. Thomas Aquinas, the great baptizer of Aristotle, understood that on the basis of reason alone, one could know that God is (*quod sit Deus*), but not what God is (*quid sit Deus*). The latter requires the self-revelation of the Triune God in Scripture and history. Remember there are good reasons why, in 1277, the Bishop of Paris found gnesio-Aristotelianism incompatible with the Christian faith. Aristotle, Luther said, is safe only for those who have first been made fools in Christ.

Aristotle's understanding of God's love falls far short of the Trinitarian model based on the incarnation and the atonement of Jesus Christ. The story of Jesus is not just a nice overlay on what we can know about God some other way. "If you have seen me," said the Master, "you have seen the Father." Open theists are not wrong to question certain forms of classical theism that reduce God to an impersonal monad devoid of communicability and love. But what they fail to see is that theologians of the Great Tradition from Irenaeus to Barth and von Balthasar also reject this kind of sterile deity. Faithful to Scripture, the consensual teachers of the Church invariably portray a dynamic, generous God who gives and loves, and even grieves and groans, without ever compromising His eternal freedom and holy Lordship over everything in heaven and on earth, the future no less than the past.

The statement, "Divine sovereignty and significant human freedom are not competitive exclusives," is not a line from a Fosdick hymn, though I dare say that even that crusty old liberal would have agreed with it. Michael Rennier proves nothing by constructing a syllogism in response to which, he says, open theists deny God's knowledge of future contingents. The real issue, of course, is what is meant by "alternative choice" or "free will." Finally, I think I'll stick with "seminiscient" as an apt term to describe the open theist construal of God's knowledge. In a brilliant move anticipating Einstein's theory of relativity by 1,500 years, Augustine in Book XI of the *Confessions* claims that space and time were cocreated by God simultaneously. Thus to say that God knows everything that can be known, except the future, and to call this omniscience is like saying that God can be everywhere one can go, except Texas, and to call this omnipresence.

Accentuate the Positive

Richard John Neuhaus comments in regard to the "solas" of Reformation Protestantism that "it is a terrible thing to learn your catechism against others," i.e., against Catholic theology (While We're At It, June/July). I wonder—would Father Neuhaus entertain similar reservations about the Nicene Creed? After all, it would seem "a terrible thing" to express one's creed against others, in this case the Arians.

Mark Sidwell
Department of History
Bob Jones University
Greenville, South Carolina

RJN responds:
An interesting point, but in the Nicene Creed that I know and believe there is nary a mention of the Arians, whereas I have never seen a

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treatment of the "solas" that is not in explicit reference to the putative errors of Catholicism. It is true that every affirmative implies a negative, but one should learn one's catechism in the affirmative.

How Many Categories?

May I suggest that Richard John Neuhaus' analysis ("Why Aren't Muslims Like Us?" Public Square, June/July) of Bernard Lewis' essay in the *Atlantic* did not go quite far enough? Lewis creates a false dilemma by dividing Christians into triumphalists (who know that all who don't hear about Christ go to hell, and seem to relish the thought) and relativists (who know that many who don't hear about Christ won't go to hell because they are faithful adherents of their own religions).

Father Neuhaus unmasks the fallacy by revealing a third category: those who know that some who don't hear about Christ won't go to hell, yet this salvation is still through the redemptive work of Christ. This is a good start, and I take Fr. Neuhaus' word for it that at least since 1990 the Catholic Church "emphatically teaches that God denies nobody—Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, whatever—the grace necessary to salvation" and that they can be saved "whether or not they have heard of Christ."

But there is at least one more category, and I agree with Fr. Neuhaus that it is a minority position. What about those of us who emphatically teach that God would not be unjust if he were to deny *anybody*—"Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, whatever—the grace necessary to salvation," since He is obligated to show grace to no one?

Fine distinctions can be tedious, but here it goes: we are those who don't know that any of those who don't hear won't go to hell. Whether God chooses to save them or not is certainly His business, but in the end, the Lord "has mercy on whom He desires." Is it theologically naïve to suggest that Scripture might have something to say about all this? Something like "how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" Catholics and Protestants alike have sent out boatloads of missionaries for several hundred years precisely because they believed there was "no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." That seems to have an apostolic ring to it.

(The Rev.) Steve Bateman
First Bible Church of Decatur
Decatur, Alabama

RJN responds:
Fine distinctions are more rare than tedious. I'm not sure that what Pastor Bateman proposes requires a fourth category. The sovereign God is not obligated to save any, but He desires to save all, and so denies the necessary grace to none, which may be rejected by some, perhaps by many. In any event, we are agreed on the apostolic missionary mandate.

Confusion on Capital Punishment

Richard John Neuhaus' comments in While We're At It (June/July) regarding capital punishment have caused me confusion. Father Neuhaus apparently agrees with Dean Mark A. Sargent of Villanova Law School that the Pope's capital punishment teaching "[was] not made with the authority that requires the faithful obedience of all Catholics and Catholic institutions, unlike the Church's position on abortion."

While the status of the Church's death penalty teaching is surely inferior to its position on abortion, does that fact permit disobedience? True, the capital punishment teaching was not promulgated ex cathedra. But *Lumen Gentium* states, "Religious submission of mind and will must be shown in a special way to the authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking ex cathedra." The Council further explains that "judgments made by [the pope] are [to be] sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will. His mind and will in the matter may be known either from the character of the documents, from his frequent repetition of the same doctrine, or from his manner of speaking."

In the case of capital punishment, John Paul has unambiguously declared his mind and will in an encyclical, in several public addresses, and even in the official *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. I'll acknowledge that the death penalty teaching is untraditional, and perhaps simply prudential, but it nonetheless appears to easily meet the requirements laid out in *Lumen Gentium*. So why are Catholics entitled to disobey?

Joseph Miller
Ann Arbor, Michigan

RJN responds:
Quoting the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, the *Catechism* states that "the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity 'are very rare, if not practically nonexistent.'" I agree. It is in no way a question of "disobeying" the Magisterium if, for instance, one has a different estimate than the Pope with respect to how rare such cases are, or if one notes that an action may be morally permissible but not absolutely necessary. For a more thorough discussion of the Church's teaching on capital punishment, see Avery Cardinal Dulles' "Catholicism & Capital Punishment" (FT, April 2001).

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Opinion

Tolkien and the Gift of Mortality

Anna Mathie

When I started reading *The Lord of the Rings* as an undergraduate, I was half-embarrassed to be doing so. I might become one of those girls who left each other messages on the dorm message board in elvish runes and stayed up late discussing the geography of Middle Earth in fake English accents. Even after I had overcome my snobbery and discovered the book's magnificence, literary pretensions still kept me away from the appendices: detailed explanations of invented anthropology and linguistics—what could they be but the self-indulgent folly of an otherwise great writer? But when chance or boredom finally led me to leaf through them one day, I came upon what I still find the most exquisitely sorrowful moment in a book filled with exquisitely beautiful sorrow.

The wise and good Arwen, who has given up her elvish immortality to be the mortal Aragorn's queen, is overcome at his deathbed and pleads for him to stay with her longer. He refuses, saying that it is right for him to go with good grace and before he grows feeble. Then he tells her:

> I speak no comfort to you, for there is no comfort for such pain within the circles of the world. The uttermost choice is before you: to repent and go to the Havens and bear away into the West the memory of our days together that shall there be evergreen but never more than memory; or else to abide the Doom of Men.

Arwen replies that she has no choice:

> I must indeed abide the Doom of Men whether I will or nill: the loss and the silence. But I say to you, King of the Numenoreans, not till now have I understood the tale of your people and their fall. As wicked fools I scorned them, but I pity them at last. For if this is indeed, as the Elves say, the gift of the One to Men, it is bitter to receive.

In this new and bitter knowledge, she goes away alone after Aragorn's death, "the light of her eyes . . . quenched . . . cold and gray as nightfall that comes without a star." She dies alone in the dead land of Lorien, where deathless Elves once lived.

For Arwen, otherwise infinitely wiser than we, death is the one unknown, a new and unexpected discovery. Aragorn knows better; he knows, as all mortals should, that comfort is impossible and even unworthy in the face of death. Yet he still holds fast to what Arwen has only known as an abstract theological tenet: that death is truly God's gift.

I cry whenever I reread this passage; it haunts me like no other, though it's hard to explain why. At the heart of it is the phrase "the gift of the One to Men." Tolkien looks unblinkingly at "the loss and the silence" of death, but remains steadfast: death is our curse, but also our blessing.

He has hidden this particular tale away in an appendix, but the same idea of mortality permeates the whole book. The plot centers on a ring that gives immortality and corrupts its bearer. Much of the book's character interest arises from the interactions between mortal and immortal races, who both mystify and fascinate each other. The structure of the work also echoes mortality itself. I have heard friends criticize the long and leisurely denouement (over a hundred pages), but I've never understood such complaints. Myself, I was grateful for every page, always vividly aware that they would run out all too soon. Those closing chapters are a portrait of mortality: however happily a story ends, it must end, and that itself is our great sorrow. All that is beautiful and beloved dies. The Fellowship of the Ring accomplishes its quest, but with the end of its troubles comes the separation of its members. Gandalf and the High Elves win the war, but their own victory banishes them from Middle Earth. With them "many fair things will fade and be forgotten." Frodo has saved the world but now longs to leave it. This has to be one of literature's saddest happy endings. Tolkien makes us savor the bittersweet, for he knows (like Gandalf) that "not all tears are an evil."

Clearly, mortality is at the heart of this story. The subject has become a hot topic today, with Leon Kass and other "mortalists" arguing against a research culture that sees death and aging merely as foes to be overcome. If medicine succeeds in making man immortal, or even much longer-lived, the mortalists argue, much that makes human life worthwhile will be lost. Kass has used the wisdom of such ancient authors as Homer to illustrate his vision of mortality's benefits. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien makes a Christian case for the same claim. In Tolkien's world, immortality and

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long life lead even the noblest creatures to a spiritual dead end, or to outright corruption.

The virtues of mortality are most obvious in the great paradox of the book: that the very mortal Hobbits are the only ones who can resist the Ring's seduction and destroy it. Seemingly the most insignificant and lowliest race of all, they spend their (relatively) short lives in small pursuits. They have little use for lofty "elvish" ideas. As most characters in *The Lord of the Rings* remark, they are unlikely saviors of the world. In fact, their lowly mortality may be their greatest asset.

The Hobbits are firmly enfleshed. They love gardening, visiting, eating and drinking—"six meals a day (when they could get them)"—and parties and presents. Also, unlike the other lands we see, the Shire is full of children, for Tolkien tells us that Hobbits have very large families, Frodo and Bilbo being "as bachelors very exceptional." This is true of no other people in Middle Earth. The immortal Elves, of course, need few children. Arwen seems to be spoken of as one of the youngest of her people; they call her their "Evenstar." Legolas has apparently been his father's heir for aeons. The Dwarves, though mortal, are very long-lived, and they have children so seldom that many believe they are not born, but grow from stones. They have few women, and even fewer children, as many women choose not to marry; likewise with the men, "very many also do not desire marriage, being engrossed in their crafts." The Ents seem to live more or less forever, but even they are dying out. "There have been no Entings—no children, you would say, not for a terrible long count of years," Treebeard tells the Hobbits. "The Ents gave their love to the things they met in the world, and the Entwives gave their thoughts to other things." Finally the Entwives disappeared altogether.

It is not only the older and the lesser races that have ceased to bear children. Barrenness also characterizes Gondor. Once great, the city has declined. Pippin sees there many houses that have fallen empty, so that "it lacked half the men that could have dwelt at ease there." Beregond the guard tells him, "There were always too few children in the city." When Faramir, younger son of the Steward of Gondor, meets Frodo, he explains his country's decay more fully:

> Death was ever present, because the Numenoreans still, as they had in their own kingdom and so lost it, hungered after endless life unchanging. Kings made tombs more splendid than houses of the living, and counted old names in the rolls of their descent dearer than the names of sons. Childless lords sat in aged halls musing on heraldry; in secret chambers withered old men compounded strong elixirs, or in high cold towers asked questions of the stars. And the last king of the line of Anorien had no heir.

Personal immortality, or the lure of it, seems to turn members of all these races in on themselves. The Elves dwell more in their memories than in the present; the long-lived mortal races turn to glorious deeds in an attempt at personal immortality. For the Elves and the Ents, the result is a kind of lethargy. For men it can be far more sinister: in Boromir and especially in Denethor, Tolkien shows the pride and despair that come from the pursuit of personal immortality through individual glory.

The Hobbits have no illusions that they can in any sense live forever. As a result, they concentrate on immediate and animal concerns. They pursue immortality only by a far humbler and more mortal path, the ordinary, impersonal, animal immortality of parenthood. It's no accident that everyone who meets the Hobbits mistakes them for children at first. Even after long acquaintance, they are to Legolas "those merry young folk" and to Treebeard "the Hobbit children." Something about the Hobbits is so lively and natural that they invariably turn the minds of others toward childhood and children.

This fertility, this willingness to pass life on to a new generation rather than grasping for "endless life unchanging," is the Hobbits' great strength, as it should likewise be mankind's proper strength. It makes them at once humbler than immortals, since they place less confidence in their own individual abilities, and more hopeful, since their own individual defeats are not the end of everything. The life that lives for its offspring may never achieve perfection, but neither is it ever utterly defeated or utterly corrupted. Some hope always remains. The Elf Legolas and the Dwarf Gimli discuss this tenacity of mortals when they first see Gondor. Gimli observes in the older stonework of the city a promise unfulfilled by the newer:

> "It is ever so with the things that men begin: there is a frost in Spring or a blight in Summer, and they fail of their promise."
>
> "Yet seldom do they fail of their seed," said Legolas. "And that will lie in times and places unlooked for. The deeds of Men will outlast us, Gimli."

Here and throughout the book, seed is Tolkien's symbol for the hope peculiar to mortals. Gandalf tells Denethor that he too is a steward, charged with preserving all good things. He will not have failed completely, he says, "if anything passes through this night

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that can still grow fair or bear fruit and flower again in days to come." Gondor's emblem, a white tree, withered centuries ago. Even after Sauron's defeat, Aragorn is anxious for his realm until he can find a seedling to replant in the Citadel. For as he tells Gandalf, however long his life, he is still mortal. Gandalf's answer tells Aragorn to seek hope in mortality: "Turn your face from the green world, and look where all seems barren and cold." Aragorn finds the seedling—growing alone on a stony, snowy slope—that signifies the continuance of his reign through his heirs. He seeks life in a place of death, as he did before in the Paths of the Dead, as Arwen did when she chose mortal life with him, as the Hobbits did when they undertook the hopeless quest, and as Gandalf did when he died, though immortal.

The hope of life that mortality offers is far from certain. Legolas and Gimli's conversation continues with Gimli wondering if men's deeds will "yet come to naught in the end but might-have-beens." "To that the Elves know not the answer," replies Legolas.

We do not know the answer either. Tolkien is not cheerily trying to pretend that our condition is ideal, or that mortality guarantees us any kind of virtue. But unlike the earthly immortality he has envisioned for us, our mortality offers another and higher hope beyond this world, however uncertain it may seem. This hope is the comfort Aragorn offers Arwen in his last words: "In sorrow we must go, but not in despair. Behold, we are not bound for ever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory, Farewell."

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Scandal, Prayer, and Penance

Sister Mary Catharine of Jesus, O.P.

When my family in Massachusetts first told me the news of priests in Boston being accused of pedophilia, I listened with half an ear, quickly filing it away as yet another piece of gossip to discredit the Catholic Church. Yet as the volume of accusations intensified, I knew I could not ignore it. Living the monastic life means that I was spared the media saturation on the issue. We get the daily paper and subscribe to a few news journals both secular and Catholic, so let's say that I am informed. But while the media might give me the facts, my response has little to do with them. Yes, as many have noted, the scandal was occasioned by appalling acts of sin. But for me the scandal prompted reflection not so much on the reality of sin as on the deeper reality of God's unbounded forgiveness.

It is commonly thought that a call to the monastic life requires that one be especially holy, already a "saint." In fact, the truth is just the opposite. One of the first searing, even excruciating truths I learned in the monastery is how deeply sinful I am. But that, I also learned, is only half the story. In facing and acknowledging my sinfulness, I embrace, or rather, am embraced by, the gift of the incarnate love of God. This self-knowledge is essential to monastic life. Only when it is accepted can I hold all people in the deepest center of my prayer. It is from this truth that the cloistered nun lives her vocation as a spouse of the crucified Christ.

We refer to this past year's revelations of sexual abuse by Catholic priests as "the scandals." What if our society was so corrupt that no one saw these actions as scandalous? They would still be wrong. Why? Infidelity to one's vows is sinful; infidelity to the grace and character of sacred ordination to the priesthood is sinful; sexual abuse in whatever form is sinful. Leading another person into a sinful action is wrong and also sinful. Let's face it, the bottom line is that "the scandals" are about the failure of priests to live up to their vocation and to face the consequences of their actions, first for themselves—because everyone is personally responsible to strive for holiness—and second, for those they have injured. Whether anyone is "scandalized" is secondary.

The monk or nun is said to be at the *axis mundi*, the axis of the world. St. Thérèse of Lisieux would expand this and say that her vocation is "to be love in the heart of the Church." At solemn profession, I placed my hands in those of my prioress, professing to live my vows *usque ad mortem*, until death. By this simple gesture I no longer belong to myself but am consecrated for the specific mission of being a woman of prayer and intercession for the Church. The long consecratory prayer of the Roman Rite of Religious Profession states, "May the countenance of Christ Your Son shine forth in her, Father, so that all who see her will know that he is present in Your Church." I become not just one who prays; I am a prayer before the face of God for all people, but especially for the Church. This is why I believe that my contemplative vocation provides a unique perspective on the current crisis.

I belong to the Order of Preachers, popularly known as "the Dominicans." Our founder, St. Dominic de Guzmán (1170-1221), was a man of extraordinary gifts of grace, of holiness, and most of all of compassion for sinners. We are told that he would spend his days

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preaching the gospel and his nights in prayer. Filled with a love that he could not contain, he would cry out in the dark nights, "O God, what will become of sinners!" To the friars he would say: "If you cannot weep for your sins because you have none, then weep for the sins of others."

The mission of the Order of Preachers is to preach for the salvation of souls. St. Dominic knew that for the mission to bear fruit, it must be rooted in, and overflow from, contemplation. So, from the beginning, St. Dominic associated contemplative monasteries of women with the preaching mission of the Order. These monasteries would be places where the primary purpose would be to search for the face of God, sharing in the redemptive work of Christ in prayer and penance.

People often ask us, "Aren't you scandalized by what our priests are doing?" It comes as quite a shock when we respond, "No, but we are deeply saddened by what is taking place." We are heirs of the "Cry of Dominic," and his compassionate love for sinners becomes our own. Sadness sounds like a rather lame response to such great sin, but it is instead the response of one who shares in what the Church is: the Mystical Body of Christ.

We haven't heard much (if anything) of this aspect of the current crisis. There is much finger pointing directed at "the Church," meaning "the hierarchy." However, the hierarchy is not "the Church." The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. Every baptized member is organically a part of this mystery of which Christ is the Head. This is nothing new; St Paul insisted on it: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:12). In order to get beyond this crisis, the inner division, the distrust, and the wrangling for power, we must rediscover this great gift of God to us. St. Augustine sums it up in a daring statement: "And there shall be one Christ loving himself—for when the members love one another, the body loves itself."

There is likewise a long patristic tradition, nourished by Scripture, of expressing this unique relationship by the image of Bridegroom and Bride. Christ is the Bridegroom; the Church is the one Bride of Christ. "He who has the bride is the bridegroom," John the Baptist told his disciples: "The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice; therefore this joy of mine is now full" (John 3:29).

While this nuptial dimension belongs to the entire Church by reason of our baptism, the cloistered nun is consecrated to be an icon of this reality. In this particular way of being of and for the Church, cloistered nuns share in the redemptive work of Christ on the Cross. It is precisely because of the vocation to be a living sign of the nuptial relationship of Christ with the Church that I believe we know in a mystical way the sufferings every person in the Church experiences in this time of crisis. In a way known only by God, we carry in our prayer the burden of the priests who have sinned, and the men and women who have suffered from their actions.

By the gift of ordination, bishops and priests are called to be images of Christ, to act *in persona Christi*. They are obligated by their vocation to love and cherish the Church in the very same way Christ the Bridegroom loves and cherishes the Church. Priesthood essentially and ontologically changes an ordinary, sinful man into another Christ. The very fact of his ordination sets a priest apart, not for his own glorification but as an image of the love of Christ for his people. In the past, as a reaction to clericalism, we have sometimes expected our priests to be "one of the guys," and perhaps this is where we have erred. As the father of one of the sisters in my community likes to say, "The more a priest is like me, the less I need him." Many today are afraid to trust our priests. Insisting that priests develop a "professional" attitude or maintain "boundaries" fails to acknowledge the specific relationship of a priest to his people. We must allow our priests to rediscover again the special nature of their calling. We must encourage our priests to nurture their love of Christ and find in this love their call to be our shepherds.

When family members solicit my reactions to the crisis, I am often called to task for seeming to be more concerned for our priests rather than for those whom they have injured. In fact, the victims also find a place in my prayers for the grace of healing and the freedom of forgiveness. If I seem driven to be an instrument of prayer and penance for our priests—all priests, whether guilty, accused, or discouraged—it is because, first, I believe that this particular emphasis of my prayer is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Second, it is exactly this frightening burden a man assumes when he is ordained to the priesthood that calls forth from the contemplative nun the obligation of her prayer.

If we are to grow beyond this crisis and learn from our mistakes, then it seems to me that all members of the Church need to discover again this relationship of love that can flourish only in trust and commitment. We must allow God to woo us back to fidelity, much in the same way as the prophet Hosea woos back his bride: "And I will lead her back into the desert and speak to her heart" (Hosea 2:14). Many in the Church would liken this past year and a half to a time in the desert. As in any human marriage, there must be trust, or the relationship is bound to fail. Unlike a human marriage, we have the promise and guarantee that Christ will never abandon the Church. It will not be easy, but the healing

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of the wounds of distrust can begin if our lives are centered on Jesus.

Holiness, the desire to know and love God as He loves us, is the answer, as is an acknowledgment that each and every one of us in the Church bears the responsibility of supporting and challenging one another toward holiness. How often have we demanded of our priests that they be hyperactive administrators, social workers, or church managers? Do we pray and sacrifice for our priests? Do we encourage our priests to be men of prayer, men whose lives are focused on the Eucharist, men who are signs and shepherds of our own call to holiness?

The Church was born from a scandal—the scandal of the Cross: "But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to the Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians, 1:20). In the scandal of the Cross we can find meaning in today's scandal, which has rocked the very foundation of the faith of some of our people, and has also affected the way the Catholic Church functions in our country. We can allow this crisis to be a stumbling block and go away in disgust or we can allow it to be the beginning of a new springtime for the Church in America. After the Crucifixion of Jesus on Calvary there was the Resurrection. Personally, I see this Long Lent as a seed-ground of hope. Too many tears have watered it. The spring will come.

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The Bigot's Opera

Michael Linton

The Commander enters the living room carrying a big black Bible. He reads Genesis 30:1-3 to his middle-aged wife and to Offred, her handmaid. The scripture finished, the wife and handmaid get on the floor, Offred sliding between the wife's spread legs. The handmaid hikes up her skirt and leans back against the wife while the Commander unzips his trousers. They copulate. As they thrust and grind the orchestra and chorus burst into "Amazing Grace."

This is act one, scene nine: the "Forepray" (sic) and "Ceremony" sections of Danish composer Poul Ruders' opera, *The Handmaid's Tale*, adapted from the novel by Margaret Atwood. At its first performances in Copenhagen in March 2000, the opera enthralled listeners (it was greeted with "foot-stomping and deafening euphoria"), gaining for the then fifty-one-year-old composer not only repeated performances in Copenhagen's following season but an internationally released CD of the premiere (on the Dacapo label) and a Danish knighthood to boot. The CD was nominated for two Grammy Awards and in 2002 it received the Cannes Classical Award for the best work by a living composer. The English National Opera presented the work's British premiere in London in April 2003, followed by the Minnesota Opera's North American premiere in St. Paul in May. The critic for *Time* called the Danish performance "an exhilarating theatrical experience," and the score "sumptuous" and "resplendent." The *Manchester Guardian* called it "remarkable at every stage" and hailed Ruders as the "Richard Strauss of the computer-age orchestra." In London the *British Independent* called it a "triumph." The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* was ecstatic about the work's St. Paul staging, an enthusiasm shared by *USA Today*.

Again and again critics commented on the timeliness of the opera. One writer observed the resonance between the opera and the attempt of a "religiously driven, if not quite fundamentalist U.S. government" to force a Pax Americana on Iraq. Another wrote, "It seems like a reflection on the daily news." And Ruders himself has said, "We are in the time of [the opera] now. What Atwood wrote about is actually happening. I wouldn't call [the story] science fiction; I prefer to call it science vision, and it's frighteningly prophetic." Anthony Tommasini, writing for the *New York Times*, concluded his enthusiastic review with the opinion that *The Handmaid's Tale* was one of the few recent operas which the Metropolitan Opera "should feel obliged to present."

Well, I feel obliged to protest. Ruders is certainly a skillful orchestrator, but his scores are no more colorful than those of two hundred or so other living composers. Moreover, the relationship between Ruders' music and his libretto is superficial, and the story line of the opera is so convoluted as to be at times incomprehensible. And if it is a triumph, it is as the first work of art to displace Andres Serrano's 1987 photograph of a crucifix submerged in urine as the preeminent work of art calculated to offend Christian sensibilities.

Ruders (born in Ringsted, Denmark, in 1949) was trained as a church musician and organist at the Royal Danish Academy. He came to international attention

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when his first symphony, premiered by the BBC Orchestra, won the Royal Philharmonic Society's 1990 Prize for the best large scale composition performed in London that year. Over a dozen of his works are now available on CD. When Ruders was approached by the Danish Opera commission, he insisted that Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel be the subject of his work. After convincing a skeptical Atwood of her novel's theatric viability, he hired the British actor/writer Paul Bentley to provide the libretto.

Bentley's libretto follows the general path of Atwood's novel. Disasters have befallen the United States. Earthquakes along the Pacific Coast, accidents at nuclear power plants, pollution, epidemics, and war have plunged the country into chaos. The President, Vice President, the Cabinet, and Members of Congress have been assassinated by Christian fundamentalists who have established the "Bible-based" Republic of Gilead. The Republic has suspended the Constitution and outlawed abortion, divorce, and pornography. Women may not read, own property, or work outside the home. Because environmental factors have resulted in the sterilization of many women, those who are still fertile but who have been deemed by the Republic to have been immoral before the revolution (adulterers, divorcees, prostitutes, etc.), are enslaved in reeducation camps.

These women are the "handmaids." The term comes from Genesis 30. There, Rachel, because she is barren, convinces Jacob to impregnate Rachel's handmaid Bilah. Bilah bears first Dan and later Naphtali and the sons are adopted by Rachel, or "born upon her knees" as the Scripture phrases it. In Gilead, "handmaids" are assigned to breed with leaders of the Republic who have infertile wives, taking the name of their temporary assignments (the handmaid of the opera is known as Offred because she is "of Fred," a Commander of Gilead).

Prior to the establishment of the Republic (which in the opera is called "the time before"), Offred had an affair with a man named Luke. Divorcing his wife, Luke married Offred and together they had a daughter. The couple senses their danger with the Republic's establishment and tries to flee to Canada but are arrested at the border. Luke's fate is unknown, but the daughter is taken by the Republic and given to new parents while Offred is assigned to the handmaids' camp.

At the camp the handmaids are reeducated in the doctrine of Gilead ("thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not commit gender treachery [homosexuality], thou shalt not read or write," and so forth). Offred is assigned to the Commander, whose wife, Serena Joy, a gospel singer in the time before, is barren. Each month the Commander and Offred ritually mate (as described above), but Offred fails to conceive. When an attending doctor offers to impregnate her himself, an act highly illegal but commonly practiced, Offred refuses. Relations between handmaids and their masters are restricted to the ritual matings, but the Commander wishes to have greater intimacy with Offred and clandestinely invites her to his private room, where they play Scrabble, read, and talk. Eventually the Commander takes her to "Jezebel's," a sex club reserved for the highest officials of the Republic (it happens to be in the same hotel where Offred had had her trysts with Luke in the time before).

Through other handmaids, Offred learns of a resistance movement and she is asked to join and provide the movement with information about the Commander. She refuses. Still not conceiving, Serena Joy bribes Offred into having sex with their handyman. This is a very dangerous act punishable by death, but Serena Joy gets Offred to agree by allowing her to see a photograph of her daughter. Offred and the handyman have sex.

Serena Joy discovers that the Commander has taken Offred to Jezebel's and confronts the handmaid. Republic police burst on the scene and arrest the handmaid, although their leader signals to Offred that they are really members of the resistance there to take her to safety.

The story is told through the convention of an academic conference. The date is 2195, and a Professor Pieixoto of Cambridge University is presenting a paper at the "Twelfth Symposion on the Republic of Gilead." He has discovered a series of cassette tapes on which a handmaid of the Republic has recorded the story of her life, or at least fragments of that story. The opera both begins and ends with the Professor delivering spoken monologues, given as if he were presenting a scholarly paper. Her tale is presented in a series of overlapping flashbacks. Scenes of Offred's life in the reeducation center or with the Commander are mixed with scenes from the time before, sometimes the two times appearing simultaneously. The role of Offred herself is double cast, with a mezzo-soprano singing the Offred of the Republic and a lyric soprano singing the role of Offred in the time before.

Ruders' musical idiom is typical of mainstream art composition today and is highly similar to the operatic work of Thomas Ades, William Bolcom, John Harbison, and John Adams. There are choruses for the handmaids in the reeducation center reminiscent of Orff and a male chorus of apparently highly erudite police who sing in Latin. The mezzo-soprano Offred has two set arias and Ruders includes a summary unison duet for both Offreds. As befits a governmental commis-

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sion, Ruders was able to write for a large orchestra, his triple winds frequently doubling other instruments, his percussion expanded to five players, and the ensemble augmented by two electronic keyboard players.

Ruders uses all these musicians well. Certainly the opera's greatest strength lies in its scoring, which is consistently colorful and never uninteresting. But problems arise almost immediately. Ruders has a tin ear for setting English to music. He has little sense of the idiomatic flow of the language, and because his music generally fights his words' natural rhythms, the text becomes largely unintelligible despite his singers' greatest efforts. And he has problems being lyrical. This seriously weakens what should have been the opera's most important point, Offred's one real moment alone on stage, when, after her examination by the doctor, she laments her failure to conceive and her life as a mere tool for propagation.

Yet there is one area in which Ruders' opera is stunningly successful. *The Handmaid's Tale*, both in Atwood's novel and Ruders' opera, is a sharp depiction of how the postmodernist left views conservative American Protestants, or "fundamentalists" (the left is typically a bit hazy on the taxonomy of religion). The Republic of Gilead—the invention of right-wing Christian fundamentalists—is a culture of robotic obedience, brute tyranny, sex slavery, torture, terrorism, sadism, and summary execution.

Although Atwood's story is a fantasy, she seeks to give it a sense of plausibility by basing it upon real elements of American fundamentalism. But she gets almost all of these wrong. Most fundamentalists aren't that interested in politics (much to the chagrin of some politicians). They are interested in the Rapture. Should cataclysmic disasters befall America, fundamentalists wouldn't rise up and seize the government. They would most likely be in a deep crisis of faith, since according to their most popular understanding of biblical prophecy, calamities like that shouldn't happen, or at least the saved shouldn't be there to endure them.

Similarly out of joint is the notion that Rachel's example in Genesis 30 would be taken by fundamentalists as justification for concubinage. Anybody who reads Scripture—and fundamentalists read quite a lot of it—knows that Rachel's faithless desperation and Jacob's complicity in it sets off a domestic disaster, eventually resulting in the attempted murder of Joseph. It isn't a precedent to be followed. It's one to be avoided. And the notion that fundamentalist women would ever let their men run roughshod over them in the way suggested by *The Handmaid's Tale* shows that Atwood knows nothing about her subjects.

Which brings us to "Amazing Grace." "Fundamentalists" don't have icons. There are no hallowed images of miraculous origin or holy relics that serve as emblems of their faith. Instead, they have hymns. No hymn is more intimately connected with American fundamentalism than "Amazing Grace." Everything about it—its "grace alone" text, its Calvinist tone, the echoes of Psalm 23 that resonate behind the words, the millenarianism of its anonymous fifth verse, its historic associations with the slave trade and John Newton's own "born again" experience, even its "gapped note" scalar pattern which is so characteristic of Anglo-American folk songs and influences almost all branches of American music—all of this combines to give the hymn a unique place in conservative American Protestantism. I can honestly say that the hymn is my life, in sum and total. Tens of thousands, if not millions, of other American "fundamentalists" would say much the same.

Ruders uses the hymn several times. When Offred meets her lover in the hotel room in the time before, it's heard on the radio being sung by Serena Joy. It's heard again when Offred is taken by the Commander to the same room when the hotel is Jezebel's. And it's heard—the off-stage choir singing all four verses—when Offred and the Commander ritually mate. Ruders intends his audience to recognize the music as an important aspect of fundamentalist religion and to reinterpret it in his operatic context as an anthem of fraudulent piety and institutionalized rape.

To have your religion distorted and ridiculed and then to have one of your culture's most deeply treasured expressions purposely profaned—well, it's not very pleasant. And if you're the type prone to feeling demeaned, it's pretty demeaning. Some would go further, to call the opera—and not without justification—an example of "hate speech."

Now, I think Ruders has every right to write whatever kind of opera he wants. And I think it's the right of the Minnesota Opera to believe that Ruders' opera "fits perfectly into all of [its] artistic goals" and thus to overlook dozens of much more important new operas (including several by resident Minnesota composers) in its favor. And should Marshall Fields—yes, the same folks who make those delightful windows at Christmas—choose to proudly sponsor the production (as they did), well they too have the right to encourage art about which they are enthusiastic. No one forced me to buy my ticket and I could have left the performance anytime I wanted. Free speech is free speech, no matter how hateful it might be.

Yet there's something more troubling than Atwood's and Ruders', and apparently even Marshall Fields', twisted view of fundamentalists. The real scandal that

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The Handmaid's Tale lays bare is the left's conviction that Christian fundamentalists lie outside the social contract of society. Norms of decency for dealing with other subcultures are apparently not applicable to treatment of fundamentalists. For the smart set, they are fair game. Diversity, tolerance, and respect for "the other" have boundaries. Christian fundamentalism can be found on the other side.

In a remarkable passage in the opera's program, Dale Johnson, the Minnesota Opera's artistic director, writes that he sees *The Handmaid's Tale* as "a warning of the effects of intolerance in all its forms. Intolerance dehumanizes people, forcing their humanity underground. The best art holds up a mirror to its audience, and *The Handmaid's Tale* does that brilliantly using the operatic genre." His comments echo those of Atwood when describing her story as a work about "what happens when people condemn without understanding." Precisely.

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To Christ on the Cross

I am not moved to love you, Lord, to gain
the heaven you have promised in return.
And God, what moves me never to complain
is not the fear of hell where sinners burn.

You move me, Lord. It moves me when I see
they mock you as you draw your dying breath.
I'm moved before your body's injury.
I'm moved by what you suffered, by your death.

At length what moves me is your love, and thus,
if heaven were not real, I'd still love you;
if hell untrue, I'd fear you nonetheless.

You owe me nothing for loving you like this,
since if I did not hope for what I do,
I'd love you, Lord, with equal tenderness.

Miguel de Guevara (1585-1646)
translated from the Spanish
by Robert Schechter

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The Holocaust: What Was Not Said

Martin Rhonheimer

For decades controversy has raged over the absence of any specific reference to Jews, or to their persecution by the Nazis, in Catholic Church statements between 1933 and 1945. In addition to historically justified questions, we have seen endlessly repeated charges against the Church and Pope Pius XII, some of them merely exaggerated, others (especially in books by John Cornwell and Daniel Jonah Goldhagen) so devoid of historical foundation that they range from the absurd to the outrageous.

A number of popular Catholic apologists, most of them nonhistorians, have answered these attacks in a similarly one-sided manner, by trying to demonstrate that the Church's record during these years is beyond reproach. Their central focus is the undoubted enmity between National Socialism and the Catholic Church. They point to the Church's uncompromising condemnation of Nazi racial doctrine, most specifically in the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (1937), and to the Nazis' increasing hatred of the Catholic Church, viewed by them as the heir of Judaism because of its roots in the Jewish Old Testament. But this apologetic somehow misses the point. The Church was indeed a powerful bulwark against National Socialism and its insidious racial theories. Was the Church, however, also a bulwark against anti-Semitism?

In addressing this question, I am conscious of a double loyalty. I am a Catholic priest—but I come from a family that is three-quarters Jewish. I love my Church. I believe in the truth that the Church proclaims. I proclaim that truth myself. Yet I also have an emotional bond to Judaism, and to my Jewish relatives. I am pained by unfair Jewish attacks on the Catholic Church. But I am also pained by a one-sided Catholic apologetic that minimizes the injustice done by Christians to Jews in history, or seeks to relegate it to oblivion. I am especially aware of the Jewish sensitivity to topics that Catholics often pass over either too quickly or in silence. Even if some of the Church's present-day critics are clearly more interested in promoting their own careers or ideological agendas than in seeking the truth, some of the blame for their "success" clearly rests on Catholic shoulders.

Even when we have taken full account of the enmity between the Catholic Church and National Socialism, the Church's "silence"—the astonishing fact that no Church statement about Nazism ever mentioned Jews explicitly or defended them—cries out for explanation. Also in need of explanation is the lack of any fundamental Church protest against the Nuremberg and Italian racial laws. Even after the November 1938 pogrom against the Jews, the only person to speak out was the Berlin cathedral provost Bernard Lichtenberg (since canonized), whose protest ultimately cost him his life. A Catholic apologetic that seeks to cover over this record by constant repetition of other facts, however undeniable they may be, plays into the hands of those who unfairly criticize the Church.

Prominent Catholic historians mostly offer a different apologetic. Before and even after 1937, they argue, there was no need for Church statements to mention

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Jews specifically, to defend them, or to issue an explicit condemnation of anti-Semitism: the Roman Holy Office had already condemned anti-Semitism on March 25, 1928. Thereafter (the argument goes) anti-Semitism, defined in the 1928 decree as "hatred of the people once called by God," was inadmissible for Catholics. Some historians also cite an alleged "condemnation of anti-Semitism" from 1916.

We are told that the Church's condemnation of racism and the Nazi ideology of the state, expressed most clearly in *Mit brennender Sorge*, and in the "Syllabus against Racism" of 1938 (a Vatican decree directing Catholic universities throughout the world to counter racist theories), was clear to everyone. Equally clear, according to this argument, was the Church's defense of the Jews and its condemnation of their persecutors. The same is sometimes claimed also for Pius XII's first encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus*, issued in October 1939.

This defense of the Church, however, fails to account for a number of important facts. It ignores the existence of a specifically modern anti-Semitism, shared in varying degrees by Catholics. Nourished by traditional Christian anti-Judaism, it had social, political, and economic aspects as well. In its Catholic form it was rooted in the Church's political and social anti-modernism, especially its opposition to liberalism and all its works. For German Catholics this resulted in openness to *volkisch* and racist ideas that blurred the boundaries with Nazi ideology. Finally, there was the Catholic openness to an authoritarian state, which allowed people to think, at the start of Hitler's rule, that the Nazi state might be an acceptable alternative to liberal democracy and a bulwark against the looming threat of Bolshevism.

It was thus possible in 1933, and even as late as 1937, for a Catholic to reject Nazi racial doctrine yet remain an anti-Semite and a supporter of the Nazi regime. Indeed, historical research has shown that after 1933 parts of the Catholic press in Germany, and even more so in Austria, were increasingly hostile to Jews—and this despite their consistent rejection of Nazi racial doctrine. As a "Christian anti-Semite" and patriotic German, a Catholic could approve of the Nazis' treatment of the Jews, or at least show understanding for it.

Take, for example, an article on "The Jewish Question," published in the Catholic *Augsburger Postzeitung* on March 31, 1933, which incorporated a statement of the (Catholic) Bavarian People's Party. Deploring "the increasing 'judaizing' (*Verjudung*) of our intellectual, cultural, and scholarly life in Germany," the article asserted that "there is a certain kind of Jewish intellectualism which, despite its high intelligence, mixes with the German element in a destructive and baneful way. A people striving for national and intellectual renewal is reacting in a healthy manner when it opposes this admixture and demands that the German mind be thoroughly cleansed of Jewish influences."

Such statements require us to reconsider the Church's public declarations about the Nazi concept of the state and racism in the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*. Not only were Church declarations belated. They were also inadequate to counter the passivity and widespread indifference to the fate of Jews caused by this kind of Christian anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, especially when it was combined with newly awakened national pride. The encyclical, then, came far too late to be of any help to Jews.

In reality, however, the Church's statements were never really designed to help the Jews. The "Catholic apologetic" described above is something developed after the fact and has no roots in the historical record. Indeed, given the dominant view of the Jews in the Nazi period, it would have been astonishing if the Church had mounted the barricades in their defense. As we shall see, the failure of Church statements about Nazism and racism ever to mention the Jews specifically (save in negative ways) corresponds to an inner logic that is historically understandable—but no less disturbing to us today.

By the beginning of the twentieth century Christian anti-Judaism, traditional for centuries, had attained virtual canonical status. In association with modern racial doctrines, and influenced by political and economic considerations, it had developed in many instances into a Church-promoted anti-Semitism, which in the years following the First World War grew in scope and intensity. An example that can stand for many others is the article on "Jews" in the *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, published in 1933 under the editorship of Bishop Michael Buchberger of Regensburg. There we read: "Since their emancipation the Jews have achieved political and social power. They soon attained leading positions in the capitalist system and exploited their power in ways which were often ruthless. In addition there is the bad influence of many Jewish writers who do not respect the Christian religion. Especially important is the dominance of Jews in business, in the press, often in politics. Moreover, their great influence in the theater permits Jews with revolutionary and libertine ideas to undermine religious sentiment and the national character. Combined with the concept of race, this has produced in recent years a reaction in the form of increased anti-Semitism. The accession to power of the National Socialists has brought about a widespread exclusion of Jews from public and cultural life." (Without further discussion of

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this exclusion, the article concludes by mentioning the prohibition of kosher butchers!)

In the first volume of the same lexicon, published in 1930, the well-known article on "Anti-Semitism" by the German Jesuit Gustav Gundlach had drawn a distinction between a *volkisch* anti-Semitism promoted for strictly racist motives (which was to be rejected), and an anti-Semitism promoted for general political, economic, and cultural reasons that Christians might accept. As examples of the latter Gundlach cited two Austrian politicians, Karl Lueger and Georg von Schoenerer, prominent and outspoken anti-Semites who had strongly influenced Hitler during his years in Vienna. It is noteworthy that in the same article Gundlach rejected as unjust "laws which single out Jews simply because they are Jews," while not hesitating to call "global plutocracy and Bolshevism" forces that manifest "dark aspects of the Jewish soul expelled from its homeland" and which are "destructive of human society."

But what about the supposed "condemnation of anti-Semitism" by the Vatican in 1916? The facts are these. On February 9, 1916, Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri, acting at the behest of Pope Benedict XV, wrote a letter to the American Jewish Committee in New York, responding to a letter from the Committee to the Pope on December 30, 1915. The latter asked the Pope to exert his supreme moral authority to halt mistreatment of Jews throughout the world—in particular the pogroms then raging on the Russian front (in Polish Galicia). The letter from New York was accompanied by a lengthy memorandum. The papal response was a courteous rejection of the request, on the grounds that the Pope had no way of verifying the facts alleged in the memorandum. The papal letter assured his Jewish correspondents, however, that according to Christian principles Jews were included in the universal law of love according to which all men are brothers. The Pope wrote also that he never ceased "to inculcate among individuals, as well as among peoples, the observance of the principles of the natural law. . . . This law must be observed and respected in the case of the children of Israel, as well as of all others, because it would not be conformable to justice or to religion itself to derogate from it solely on account of divergence of religious confessions." This was merely a restatement of the Church's traditional position.

The letter was immediately published in *La Civiltà Cattolica* and in the London *Tablet*. The *New York Times* reported it under the headline: "Papal Bull Urges Equality for Jews." That was an exaggeration. The document was a private letter, not a papal bull. And it said nothing about equality in civil rights. Nor did the letter contain any rejection of social, political, or legal restrictions on Jews (as long as such restrictions did not violate natural law and the law of love) aimed at limiting "harmful" Jewish influences on society. It is reasonable to assume that those who were responsible for the pogroms which the American Jewish Committee had asked the Pope to halt never learned of the papal letter. We must remember: Europe was at war. The Holy See was determined to have a voice in future peace negotiations and hence wanted to preserve strict neutrality. The situation had certain analogies to later events, especially when we recall that it was precisely at this time that Eugenio Pacelli—later Pope Pius XII—was learning the craft of papal diplomacy.

There are similar problems with the 1928 condemnation of anti-Semitism—this one public and official—that is frequently cited in Catholic apologetics. It came in a decree of the Holy Office suppressing "The Friends of Israel," an organization that sought to overcome traditional Christian anti-Judaism in theology and liturgy, and that included a number of priests, bishops, and cardinals among its members. The 1928 decree stated that the organization's goal could not be reconciled with the Church's traditional faith. The condemnation of anti-Semitism was incidental, and it was defined very narrowly: as "hatred" (and only that) against "the people once called by God." That we read this statement today, like that of 1916—as well as others discussed below—as condemnations of anti-Semitism in any form is an indication of the distance we have traveled since the Second Vatican Council, and especially during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II. In a day when the Catholic Church not only tolerated but actively promoted the view that Jews were a harmful influence on society, such statements had a very different—much more limited—significance from what we assume today. They were simply injunctions not to hate, persecute, kill, or unjustly expropriate Jews.

This is evident in the fact that the 1928 decree left the Church's traditional anti-Judaism untouched; indeed, the same document explicitly confirmed it. This tradition, based on patristic biblical exegesis, declared that the Jews were the people "once called by God," but now cursed and guilty of Christ's death; condemned, moreover, to wander the earth without a homeland; and as such witnesses to the truth of Christianity. To be sure, Jews must not be persecuted. But society, and Christians especially, must also be protected from the Jews' harmful influence in culture and education.

The Christian view at that time was that the only solution to the "Jewish question" was conversion to Christianity. Hence racial anti-Semitism was unacceptable for Catholics: a baptized Jew ceased to be a Jew.

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Racism was an attack on the essence of Christianity, which had its roots in the Old Testament, and which embraced all people in the world. Opposition to racial anti-Semitism was thus a defense of Christians' self-understanding and a challenge to faithfulness. Precisely for these reasons it was a necessary part of the Church's strategy for survival in the face of the ideological pressures exerted by a totalitarian dictatorship. As such it was a clear rejection of the Nazis' doctrine of a master race, which would end by bringing death to "non-Aryans." In no way, however, did this imply rejection of "moderate" anti-Semitism, which included a certain understanding for *volkisch* policies and corresponding limits on the "judaizing" of society.

This comes out clearly in the semi-official commentary on the 1928 decree of the Holy Office in the very influential Jesuit journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*. Entitled "The Jewish Danger and the 'Friends of Israel,'" it was approved (like all the articles in that journal) by the Vatican Secretariat of State. Moreover, it was in full accord, as we now know, with the view of the Jews formed by Monsignor Achille Ratti—reigning in 1928 as Pope Pius XI—during his years as papal emissary and Nuncio in Poland (1918-1921). According to the author (the editor, Father Enrico Rosa, S.J.), the decree condemned anti-Semitism "only in its anti-Christian form and mentality," which was "morally and religiously unjust." The Holy Office rejected "excessive" and "extreme" anti-Semitism, the article said, but not anti-Semitism based on a clear recognition of the danger posed to society by Jews, as a consequence of their emancipation and of their connection with liberalism, socialism, and Bolshevism. "Jews are a danger to the whole world because of their pernicious infiltration, their hidden influence, and their resulting disproportionate power which violates both reason and the common good." This danger, the article said, was especially acute for people in Christian countries.

As late as 1936 the same journal wrote about the need to render the Jews "incapable of inflicting harm," always with the proviso that this must "of course be done without any persecution." The ideal remained the historic ghetto. Only in 1938 did *La Civiltà Cattolica* moderate its tone. By that time, however, the boundary between persecution, discrimination, and "other measures" against the "judaizing" of society had been blurred.

As the Nazi regime's campaign against the Church intensified, it became increasingly clear that Catholic opposition to racism had more to do with defending the Church than with any fundamental rejection of anti-Semitism or of hostility to Jews. True, the Church was always nonconformist because of its opposition to totalitarianism. But because the Nazis viewed Christianity as the heir of Judaism, the Church, especially in Germany, had to defend itself against the combination of hatred for Jews and Christians alike. The more the Church devoted itself to this task, the more it was forced to distinguish between Old Testament and post-Christian Jewry, with the inevitable result that contemporary Jews were left to look after themselves.

This was already clear in Michael Cardinal von Faulhaber's 1933 Advent sermons, in which he defended the Old Testament as the foundation of Christianity. The Munich archbishop had long been known as a friend of the Jews. In order to prevent his sermons from being exploited for political purposes, however, he had his secretary write to the Jewish World Congress to say that they did not deal with the present-day Jewish question; the sermons were only a defense of the Old Testament and of the "children of Israel" in Old Testament times. It is clear that Faulhaber's steadfast opposition to Nazi racial theories was never intended as a defense of post-Christian Jewry or of his Jewish fellow citizens against their persecutors.

The clearest example of this attitude was the pastoral letter of the Austrian Bishop Johannes Gföllner of Linz, issued on January 21, 1933, which branded as "radically un-Christian" all "contempt, hatred, and persecution of the Jewish people." No less irreconcilable with "the position of the Church" was "the rejection of the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament on racial grounds." "Nazi racial views," Gföllner explained, were "regression into the worst kind of paganism . . . completely irreconcilable with Christianity, and must therefore be totally rejected." At the same time, however, he didn't hesitate to claim that many "irreligious Jews had a very damaging influence in almost all areas of contemporary cultural life." This influence was also visible in business and trade, in the law, and in medicine. Indeed, "many of our social and political upheavals are permeated by materialistic and liberal principles stemming primarily from Jews. Every committed Christian has not only the right but the conscientious duty to fight and overcome the pernicious influence of such decadent Judaism."

Bishop Gföllner, who was one of the sharpest opponents of National Socialism in the Austrian episcopate, was speaking in the tradition of Christian Socialism represented by Karl Lueger (mentioned above). Gföllner's words are a clear example of the tranquil coexistence of Catholic anti-racism in the service of the Church and a Christian anti-Semitism nourished by traditional anti-Judaism that made Jews the scapegoats for modern trends that opposed the Church. In this view, the Jews were held responsible for everything

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opposed to Christianity in politics and society—and Christians had a duty to distinguish between "good" and "bad" Jews, the latter being identified as irreligious and fully assimilated Jews.

Such an outlook made it difficult for Catholics to develop any clear and fundamental opposition to the Nazis' Jewish policy. The constantly repeated rejection of "hatred" and "persecution" of Jews, with the insistence that the "Jewish question" could be solved only in a framework of "justice and charity," should not blind us to the fact that Church spokesmen fundamentally approved of measures to limit Jewish influence. This helps explain why, at least at first, Catholics saw little reason to defend Jews. Indeed, any attempt to do so would have caused astonishment. It also explains why Catholics were unable to react clearly to Nazi racial policy until the opportunity to influence events had long passed. The argument that, for example, protests against the November 1938 pogrom would have been useless can be turned against the Church. For it was the Church's own attitude toward the Jews that had made it difficult, if not impossible, to mobilize Christian consciences against Nazi anti-Semitism at an earlier stage, when protests might have been effective.

It is of course true that the Catholic Church was itself exposed to brutal persecution. Catholics of that time felt that they had quite enough to do defending their own interests. The tragedy is that due to Church-generated anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, and also because of the Church's initial sympathy for a government that fought against liberalism and communism, the Church itself had done much to legitimize the very regime that persecuted it.

The "Catholic position" described above certainly did not entail any approval of Nazi anti-Semitism. Indeed, Nazi ideology and methods were totally incompatible with the Catholic position. This comes out clearly, to cite one example, in a letter written by Cardinal Faulhaber on April 8, 1933 (a week after the Nazi-instigated boycott of Jews), to Alois Wurm. A Regensburg priest, Wurm had written the Cardinal protesting that following the proclamation of the boycott "not a single Catholic paper has had the courage to proclaim the teaching of the catechism, that no one may be hated or persecuted—certainly not on racial grounds. Many people see this as a Catholic failure." Wurm pleaded for a clear protest by the bishops against Nazi policy.

What the Nazis were doing to the Jews, Faulhaber wrote in his reply to Wurm, was "so un-Christian that not only every priest but every Christian must protest." At the moment, however, Church leaders had more important matters to deal with. "The preservation of our schools and Catholic organizations and the question of compulsory sterilization [of the mentally ill] are more important matters for Christianity in our country—especially when we consider that the Jews, as we have already seen in some recent instances, are quite able to look after themselves. We must not give the government an opportunity to turn the campaign against the Jews into a campaign against Jesuits." Faulhaber added that he was "astonished" by repeated questions as to "why the Church is doing nothing about the persecution of Jews. When Catholics or their bishops are persecuted we hear not a peep. That is and remains the mystery of the passion."

Faulhaber's words suggest that he was unable to see that the problem was not just the Nazis' unjust and brutal methods, but their entire anti-Jewish policy of discrimination and marginalization. He was also blind to the immensity of the danger threatening the Jews, which would soon render them defenseless. And at the same time, Church leaders were hoping they could achieve an understanding with the regime regarding the "more important matters" mentioned in Faulhaber's letter to Wurm. (The Munich Archbishop still entertained this hope after the appearance of *Mit brennender Sorge* in 1937.) Wurm's reference to the racist and un-Christian nature of the Nazis' persecution of Jews obviously did not prevent the Cardinal from being "astonished" by the many questions he was receiving as to "why the Church was doing nothing about the persecution."

Another person who urged Faulhaber to act publicly in defense of the Jews was the Dominican student chaplain in Berlin, and a leader of the German Peace League, Fr. Franziskus Stratmann. In a lengthy letter to Faulhaber of April 10, 1933, Stratmann branded Nazi racism as heresy: "But no one makes any effective protest against this indescribable German and Christian disgrace. Even priests find their anti-Semitic instincts appeased by this disgraceful behavior. . . . We know that exceptional courage is required today to bear witness to the truth. But we know too that only through such witness can humanity and Christianity be saved. True Christianity is dying of opportunism." There is no record of a reply to Stratmann from Faulhaber. Heinz Hürten writes in his standard work, *Deutsche Katholiken, 1918-1945*: "Stratmann was unable to move Faulhaber from the position he had adopted. The Cardinal's concern remained baptized Jews, members of his own Church, his own flock."

It is reasonable to assume that this stance of paralysis and passivity was strengthened by the "official" Catholic understanding of Judaism. An example can be found in an article published in 1933 in the Catholic

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paper *Junge Front*. Written by the editor, Johannes Maaßen, it stated: "The cry of the people who crucified Christ, Son of the eternal God, 'His blood be on us and on our children,' echoes down the centuries and brings upon the Jewish community ever new human suffering." The article said that no one may increase this suffering. But it also said nothing about any duty to alleviate the suffering or to protest against it. An article in a subsequent issue of the same paper—probably written by Karl Thieme—said that the injustice that the Jews were experiencing had nothing to do with their race. However, the Nazis' racist anti-Semitism confirmed "the unique status conferred on the Jews in the Old Testament. From the standpoint of sacred history their situation must be viewed as a punishment." No "political and social solution" for the Jews could ever "replace redemption by Jesus Christ." The solution of the "Jewish question" was their "fulfilment": the Jews' conversion. "In the confusion of our time it is becoming ever clearer that this fulfilment entails confession of Christ and of the Father," Thieme wrote.

Such arguments no doubt soothed Christian consciences. They made Christians spectators, witnesses to a divine-human drama of guilt and expiation, of punishment and final conversion. As late as 1941 Archbishop Conrad Gröber of Freiburg, who was even then supporting attempts to help persecuted Jews, stated in a pastoral letter that the sad lot of the Jews was the result of the curse that they had called down upon themselves when they murdered Christ. Anton Rauscher is correct when he writes that Catholic theology of that time reflected "a view of the Jews which provoked anti-Semitism on the one hand, while on the other undermining the ability to oppose it." And the historian Konrad Repgen is also correct when he says that "people thought differently at that time." But this fact, which is precisely the problem, and which distresses us today, should not be used to excuse past Catholic failure.

The way Catholics of that time viewed Jews in no way diminishes the fact that many Catholics—priests, religious, laity, and above all Pius XII—helped a great many Jews, sometimes at the risk of the rescuers' lives. There was little hatred or personal animosity to Jews as individuals. Their steadily increasing misery, culminating finally in their deportation to an unknown fate, aroused indignation or at least pity. This was especially true in Holland and France, where some bishops spoke out clearly against the deportations.

Sympathy for the increasing distress and misery of the Jews certainly seems the best explanation for the words of Pius XI to Belgian pilgrims in September 1938, which are constantly cited for apologetic purposes. With tears in his eyes the aged and ailing Pope cried out spontaneously: "Anti-Semitism is inadmissible. Spiritually we are all Semites." The words were a reference to liturgical texts in the Missal that the Belgian pilgrims had just presented: the phrase in the Eucharistic Canon, after the narrative of institution, about the "offering of Abel, Abraham, and Melchizedek." The Pope's words were never officially published; they were reported later in some Belgian papers. As David Kertzer writes, the words were "heartfelt and sincere, the cry of a man who saw a dark shadow growing ever darker across Europe."

In any event, the Pope's words remained without influence on official Church policy. They were a one-time emotional outburst of a large-hearted and impulsive man who counted Jews among his personal friends. Despite the fact that Italian racial laws had been issued shortly before this address, Pius XI did not mention them. Nor is this really surprising. For immediately before the famous words, he declared: "We recognize the right of all people to defend themselves, to take measures against all who threaten their legitimate interests." Only then did he say: "But anti-Semitism is inadmissible—spiritually we are all Semites." It is reasonable to understand the words as meaning: legitimate defense against undue Jewish influence, Yes; "anti-Semitism," hatred of the Jews as a people, No.

Had the Church really wanted to mount effective opposition to the fate that awaited the Jews, it would have had to condemn—from the very start—not only racism but anti-Semitism in any form, including the social anti-Semitism espoused by not a few churchmen. This the Church never did: not in 1933, not in 1937, nor in 1938 or 1939. It is of course true that there was no direct road from Christian anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism to Auschwitz. For Christians the solution to the "Jewish question" was conversion, not liquidation (although the history of Christian anti-Judaism also features examples of the latter). But racism alone did not lead to Auschwitz, either. Something more was needed: hatred of Jews. Rooted in large part in Christian tradition, it was this hatred that made modern anti-Semitism possible.

It is a truism to say that racism devoid of hatred for the Jews would not have endangered them. Even though the racist anti-Semitism of the Nazis and Christian anti-Judaism or Christian anti-Semitism differ fundamentally and are even mutually incompatible, the precondition that made the Nazis' racial anti-Semitism (which led in turn to Auschwitz) even conceivable was the heritage of traditional anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism. Together they created what Steven Theodore Katz, Director of the Center for Judaic Stud-

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ies at the University of Boston, has called the "terrifying otherness" of the Jews, thus stigmatizing and demonizing them. Traditional Christian anti-Judaism was the breeding ground for what Jules Isaac has called "the teaching of contempt." Without this contempt modern racism would never have been able to forge its alliance with enmity toward Jews and anti-Semitism. At a time when no one could even have imagined Hitler's "final solution" (not even the bureaucrats who would later carry it out), the only thing that could have derailed the trains to Auschwitz—if indeed that was ever possible—was unmistakable condemnation of anti-Semitism in any form.

It is true that the Church's condemnation of racism was an implicit rejection of the policy that led to the Holocaust. Seen, however, against the background of Christian and official Church attitudes towards the Jews, this was insufficient to prevent the inexorable course of events. That would have required a mobilization of Christian consciences by Protestants as well as Catholics. Germany was, after all, a predominantly Protestant country. On that side of the confessional divide, however, things were no better for the Jews: in fact they were worse. Most of the official Protestant Church failed. In growing measure German Protestants were receptive to the Nazis' racist and *volkisch* ideology and to their myth of the German people's rebirth. Even the "Confessing Church" (the most anti-Nazi group in German Protestantism) continued, like the Catholic Church, to uphold traditional Christian anti-Judaism, and defended only baptized Jews.

Later episcopal protests against the deportation of Jews in Holland and France cannot conceal the fact, noted by the respected Italian historian Giovanni Miccoli, that up to then not a single bishop anywhere had said a word about discrimination against non-baptized Jews. During the 1930s no one ever imagined that the culmination of the persecution of Jews would be their systematic liquidation. Hence people were unable to perceive the murderous danger that lurked behind the Nazis' racist theories (and, later on, the mass deportations), let alone connect it with something like the Holocaust.

This was not on anyone's horizon. The only motive people could discern for what the Nazis were doing was enmity towards Jews pure and simple. Anyone wanting to avert the Jews' fate would have had to condemn even nonracist forms of anti-Semitism. For it was these, at least in the early years, that gave the Nazis' racial policy a certain legitimacy even in Catholic eyes. And anti-Semitism was what made the Nazis' racist ideology—the deifying of "Aryan man"—into an engine of death for Jews. Questioning the legitimacy of the Nazis' racial policy, and possibly even slowing it down, required the condemnation from the very start of measures that discriminated against Jews and deprived them of their rights—as well as condemnation of the regime that instituted such measures. This is precisely what Edith Stein, bitterly aware that the German bishops were allowing themselves to be deceived, demanded of Pius XI in her now widely publicized letter of early April 1933.

This was the very time when Hitler was trying to convince the bishops of his benevolent intentions towards the Church in order to obtain a Concordat. Far from excluding the "Jewish question," Hitler put it front and center. Receiving the representative of the German Bishops' Conference, Bishop Wilhelm Berning of Osnabrück, in audience on April 26, Hitler declared: "I have been attacked because of my handling of the Jewish question. The Catholic Church considered the Jews pestilent for fifteen hundred years, put them in ghettos, etc., because it recognized the Jews for what they were. In the epoch of liberalism the danger was no longer recognized. I am moving back toward the time in which a fifteen-hundred-year-long tradition was implemented. I do not set race over religion, but I recognize the representatives of this race as pestilent for the state and for the Church, and perhaps I am thereby doing Christianity a great service by pushing them out of schools and public functions." The transcript that records these remarks contains no response by Bishop Berning. This is hardly surprising: for a Catholic Bishop in 1933 there was really nothing terribly objectionable in this historically correct reminder. And on this occasion, as always, Hitler was concealing his true intentions.

It is also true that no institution opposed the Nazis' deification of the state, people, and race as clearly as the Catholic Church. To judge rightly, however, the significance for the Jews of the condemnation of racial absolutism in the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (issued, as noted above, very late in the day), we must keep in mind the morally compromised historical context. By 1937 clarification of the Church's doctrine had become urgently necessary in order to refute the Nazis' mendacious anti-Catholic propaganda. This was the encyclical's precise purpose: to defend the Church in the face of totalitarian dictatorship. As Secretary of State Pacelli wrote to Cardinal Faulhaber on April 2, 1937, the encyclical was theologically and pastorally necessary "to preserve the true faith in Germany." The encyclical also defended baptized Jews, considered still Jews by the Nazis because of racial theories that the Church could not accept. But the encyclical never discussed Jews in general.

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Pacelli himself added to Faulhaber's milder draft of the encyclical the well-known and more sharply worded passage: "Whoever exalts race, or the people, or the state, or a particular form of state, or the depositories of power, or any other fundamental value of the human community—however necessary and honorable be their function in worldly things—whoever raises these notions above their standard value and divinizes them to an idolatrous level, distorts and perverts an order of the world planned and created by God." Speaking as pope to the cardinals on June 2, 1945, the author of this passage gave what may be considered its authentic interpretation. "The fundamental incompatibility of the National Socialist state and the Catholic Church culminates in this sentence of the encyclical. Once this had become clear, the Church could not refrain, without being unfaithful to its mission, from stating its position before the whole world." Astonishingly, there is not a single reference in this allocution, delivered a month after the end of the war in Europe, to the slaughter of millions of Jews. Instead the Pope, with his vision still limited to Catholics and Church concerns, lamented the killing of thousands of priests, religious, and laypeople. He added: "With virtual unanimity German Catholics recognized that the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* gave direction, consolation, and strength to all who took the Christian religion seriously and wished to put it into practice."

It is clear that as late as June 1945, and despite knowledge of the Holocaust, Pius XII still did not view the condemnation of racism as something intended to benefit the Jews. And it is also questionable whether the condemnation was so viewed in 1937. The same may be said of the oft-cited "Syllabus against Racism" (1938). This Vatican document says nothing about Jews or their persecution, but does mention "grief at the terrible persecution to which, as everyone knows, the Church in Germany is exposed."

The general condemnation of racism of course included the Nazis' anti-Semitic racial mania, and condemned it implicitly. The question, however, is not what the Church's theological position with regard to Nazi racism and anti-Semitism was in 1937, but whether Church statements were clear enough for everyone to realize that the Church included Jews in its pastoral concern, thus summoning Christian consciences to solidarity with them. In light of what we have seen, it seems clear that the answer to this question must be No. In 1937 the Church was concerned not with the Jews but with entirely different matters that the Church considered more important and more urgent. An explicit defense of the Jews might well have jeopardized success in these other areas.

This is confirmed by a remarkable (and sadly characteristic) exchange in November 1941 between Cardinal Faulhaber and Adolf Cardinal Bertram, President of the Fulda Bishops' Conference. Faulhaber wrote that he was being asked by laypeople whether the bishops could not do something about the "brutal deportation of non-Aryans to Poland under inhuman conditions paralleled only in the African slave trade." Bertram replied that in view of the Church's limited ability to influence the regime's policy, the bishops must "concentrate on other concerns which are more important for the Church and more far-reaching"; in particular "the ever more urgent question of how best to prevent anti-Christian and anti-Church influences on the education of Catholic youth."

This concentration on specific pastoral concerns and Church affairs was already dominant in 1933. The Catholic Church was in imminent danger. Priority had to be given to the conclusion of a Concordat guaranteeing Church rights. Defending Jews was inadvisable, Cardinal Faulhaber wrote to Pacelli on April 10, 1933, "because that would transform the attack on the Jews into an attack on the Church; and because the Jews are able to look after themselves" (these are the same arguments used in Faulhaber's letter to Wurm two days earlier). Needless to say, the assumption that the Jews could look after themselves turned out to be a monumental error.

After the Catholic Church had spent four years trying, with the help of the Concordat, to keep its head above water through a kind of "hostile cooperation" with the regime, it finally had to clarify its position and take a stand if the faithful were not to become hopelessly confused. At least until the outbreak of war, Church pronouncements, as well as its diplomacy, were restricted to intra-Church concerns. This was true in Italy as well, where the Vatican's protest against the Italian racial laws (autumn 1938) concerned only baptized Jews, and the Church's right, guaranteed in the Italian Concordat, to regulate their marriages by canon law.

Pius XII's 1939 encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* contains no explicit reference to racism. The topic is covered implicitly in the section on "The unity of the human race"—which is possibly an echo of the famous and never-issued encyclical against racism. That document would have dealt with anti-Semitism and the "Jewish question"—topics which *Summi Pontificatus* does not mention.

It is undeniable that the Church's defense of natural law was a major factor in causing people to recognize the injustice of what was happening to the Jews. (This is brought out in Bishop Clemens von Galen's

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July 31, 1937 commentary on *Mit brennender Sorge*.) This injustice was the basis for the decision to draft another encyclical that, on the basis of natural law, would condemn the persecution of the Jews explicitly. "Equality in natural law," however, was not equivalent in the Church's eyes to equality in civil law. What the Church defended above all was the right of physical inviolability, property rights, the right of parents to bring up their children in the parents' faith. The Church did not necessarily advocate equal political and economic rights. Indeed, the Church had denied these rights to Jews for centuries. In Christian eyes Jews remained a danger in politics and economics.

Moreover, the contemplated encyclical against racism and anti-Semitism was never published, and the drafts that have come to light in recent years do not make entirely pleasant reading. We can be thankful that the document never reached the level of papal teaching. Gustav Gundlach's draft, for instance, called Jewish emancipation "an error," and defended the "social separation of the people of Israel" as a divinely willed necessity to "prevent harmful contacts between Christians and Jews." The draft condemns as unjust and a violation of charity "laws which withhold civil rights from baptized Jews, thus interfering illegitimately with the Church's marriage laws." That was a matter of legitimate concern. But the perspective remains very limited.

And it was precisely this perspective which dominated. Consider another letter from Cardinal Faulhaber to Cardinal Bertram, written on October 23, 1936. "The state is justified in proceeding against Jewish excesses in civil society, especially when Jewish Bolshevists and Communists endanger public order. With regard, however, to Jews who enter the Catholic Church . . . the state can have every confidence that they are not Communists or Bolshevists." The passage immediately following shows why the rejection of racism is so crucial: "With their insistent principle, 'Once a Jew always a Jew,' the Nazis treat baptized Jews the same as those who are not baptized. The bishops hold that a converted Jew . . . has truly become a child of God. . . . Hence baptized Jews are entitled to be treated by the Church as Christians and not as Jews, and at least not to be delivered into the hands of their anti-Semitic enemies."

Granted, we must judge such statements in their historical context: at stake was the compelling concern to keep baptized Jews out of the Nazis' clutches. The protection of baptized Jews—and not a general condemnation of all hostility to Jews—was always the dominant perspective whenever the "Jewish question" was discussed, and whenever the Church condemned racism. The Church's opposition to racism (though belated) was a defense of its own teaching as well as natural law. As such it merits admiration. Claiming that it was something more is questionable.

We must also bear in mind that Catholics never entirely rejected the idea of national or *volkisch* identity based on race. Here too the boundary was blurred. There is, for example, the article on "race" from the *Handbook of Contemporary Religious Questions*, published in 1937 and edited by Archbishop Gröber of Freiburg. While clearly rejecting Nazi racial theories, the article recognizes the need for measures to safeguard German racial purity. It adds that a people that has proved itself before the bar of history is endangered by the admixture of foreign blood.

Even the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* states that "race" is a "fundamental value of the human community . . . necessary and honorable . . . in worldly things." What the encyclical condemns is the "exaltation of race, or the people, or the state, or a particular form of state . . . above their standard value . . . to an idolatrous level." In Cardinal Faulhaber's original draft this passage was considerably weaker: "Be vigilant that race, or the state, or other communal values, which can claim an honorable place in worldly things, are not magnified and idolized." Against this background we can hardly be surprised that Faulhaber proposed in an internal Church memorandum that the bishops should inform the government "that the Church, through the application of its marriage laws, has made and continues to make, an important contribution to the state's policy of racial purity; and is thus performing a valuable service for the regime's population policy." Even if Faulhaber was referring only to the Nazi policy of "eliminating parenthood for the mentally ill," his proposal, coming at the time, remained highly ambivalent.

The Church's "silence" in the years prior to the outbreak of war arose from a complex combination of anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic thinking on the one hand, and on the other hand the feeling of Church leaders that other matters were more important. This feeling arose from the belief that they were really not responsible for Jews in general.

It is of course not even remotely true to say that there was a positive intention not to help the Jews. It would be false, indeed slanderous, to claim that the Church deliberately delivered the Jews to their Nazi executioners. Nor can anyone claim that there was no desire, at least on the part of the Holy See, to help the Jews. As the London *Jewish Chronicle* reported on May 12, 1933, the Pope had recently met a delegation of Jewish leaders, including his personal friend

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Rabbi da Fano. "It is understood," the paper wrote, "that the Pope was extremely concerned about the sufferings imposed on the Jews in Germany."

Moreover, on April 4, 1933, Cardinal Pacelli, at the request of "important Israelite personalities," wrote the Papal Nuncio Cesare Orsenigo in Berlin directing him to explore the possibility of a diplomatic intervention against "anti-Semitic excesses" in Germany. Orsenigo answered immediately that any intervention by the Holy See was impossible, since anti-Semitism was now part of the official policy of the German government. The Church could not protest against German laws; that would be rejected as interference in internal politics. Orsenigo was presumably referring to the "Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service," passed on April 7, 1933. This excluded "non-Aryans," including Catholics and Protestants, from the civil service. This response from the Berlin nuncio, along with the letter of April 10 from Faulhaber to Pacelli, appears to have set the course for the Vatican's future policy. Once the Concordat was agreed to the following July, the Holy See was definitively barred from interceding explicitly and publicly for the Jews. When the Concordat was ratified in September 1933, Pacelli handed the German chargé d'affaires, Hanns Kerrl, a "Promemoria" of the Holy See stating merely that "the Holy See permits itself a word in favor of Catholics who have come to the Church from Judaism." Jews as such were not a topic for discussion.

It would appear that this is the point at which the policies of the Vatican and the German bishops (led by Cardinals Bertram and Faulhaber) began to converge, and the notorious "silence" about the Jews commenced. It is astonishing nonetheless that the Church continued to intervene on behalf of Catholic Jews, which Hitler's government always sharply rejected as political interference, forbidden by the Concordat, and anti-German. In the event, Orsenigo's warning, cited above, that protests against German laws would not be entertained by the government was not heeded in regard to non-Aryan Catholics. The encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* is a prime example, since it confirms that the Catholic Church, and especially the German bishops who were in the front line, did risk total confrontation with the Nazi state. But as we have seen, they never did this on behalf of the Jews in general. The Church acted in self-defense, to defend its pastoral interests and the faithful—and always in the hope of bringing the Nazi state to some kind of *modus vivendi* that the Church could accept.

Does this make Church leaders "guilty"? We are not called to stand in judgment over the consciences of others—especially when they were subject to pressures we have never experienced. What is essential, however, is that we ascertain the facts and not mistake the Church's condemnation of racism for a defense of Jews in general.

What is at issue, then, is not the question of guilt or innocence of individuals but recognition that the Catholic Church contributed in some measure to the developments that made the Holocaust possible. The "official Church," to be sure, was certainly not one of the causes of the Holocaust. And once the trains started rolling toward Auschwitz, the Church was powerless to stop them. Yet neither can the Church boast that it was among those who, from the start, tried to avert Auschwitz by standing up publicly for its future victims. Given the undeniable intellectual and moral quality of the German episcopate of that era and the bishops' impressive ideological opposition to Nazi persecution of the Church, their failure with regard to the Jews can only be described as tragic.

Well-intentioned Catholic apologists continue to produce reports of Church condemnations of Nazism and racism. But these do not really answer the Church's critics. The real problem is not the Church's relationship to National Socialism and racism, but the Church's relationship to the Jews. Here we need what the Church today urges: a "purification of memory and conscience." The Catholic Church's undeniable hostility to National Socialism and racism cannot be used to justify its silence about the persecution of the Jews. It is one thing to explain this silence historically and make it understandable. It is quite another to use such explanations for apologetic purposes.

Christians and Jews belong together. They are both part of the one, though still divided, Israel. This is why Pope John Paul II has called Jews, in exemplary fashion, our "elder brothers." Brotherhood includes, however, the ability to speak openly about past failures and shortcomings. This is true, of course, for both sides. But in view of all that Christians have done to Jews in history, it is Christians who should take the lead in the purification of memory and conscience. FT

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The Episcopalian Preference

Philip Turner

On August 5, 2003, the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church USA (ECUSA), following initial action by the House of Deputies of ECUSA's General Convention, gave its consent (by a ratio of roughly 60-40) to the election of the Reverend V. Gene Robinson to become the next Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire. Gene Robinson is an outspoken gay man who has lived openly with his partner for over a decade. He is also the divorced father of two children. At a later point in the same convention, delegates gave permission for the blessing of gay unions in dioceses that may choose to grant clergy license to perform these services.

There are few if any dispassionate observers of these developments. No one looks upon them with the calm of a "view from nowhere." My own view is that of a person who was born into a family of Episcopalians whose allegiance to that church stretches as far back as anyone can remember. It is the view of a person who was formed as a Christian within the bosom of the Episcopal Church, who served for ten years as a missionary of that church in East Africa, and who has taught several generations of its clergy.

From this standpoint, it seems obvious that ECUSA has by its actions confirmed a decision taken unconsciously some time ago to define its primary identity as a liberal (but liturgical) option within the spectrum of American Protestantism. In doing so, it has at the same time (perhaps again unconsciously) marginalized in its self-understanding the significance of its membership in a worldwide communion of churches that jointly claim to be a part of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. In fact, it has placed its membership in the Anglican Communion under threat, and, rather recklessly, brought that communion itself to the verge of a split between the churches of the global South and those of the North. The roots of the crisis can be found in ECUSA's recent history.

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The U.S. Constitution guarantees a right to the "free exercise," but prohibits the "establishment," of any religion. These principles provide legal and social space for the birth and growth of a plethora of religious beliefs and practices. In America, "churches" became "denominations," each of which occupies a particular niche in a religious marketplace. When Episcopalians confronted this reality, in which establishment was beyond reach, they began to fashion a uniquely American identity as a "bridge church," incorporating the best elements of both Protestantism and Catholicism. This self-presentation proved both pretentious and fatuous, and in time lost its hold on the Church's imagination. In its place came another identity—one in which the Episcopal Church would provide an enlightened alternative to the moral and theological rigidities of both Roman Catholicism and evangelical Protestantism. Emboldened by this new self-image, Episcopal clergy embraced new learning and new experience. They preached an enlightened religion attuned to the latest trends within liberal culture.

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The power of this new self-image over the mind of the Episcopal Church showed its strength as far back as 1966, when the late Bishop James Pike was accused of heresy for declaring that "the Church's classical way of stating what is represented by the doctrine of the Trinity is . . . not essential to the Christian faith." The Presiding Bishop of ECUSA, despite pressures to the contrary, wished to avoid a heresy trial and so managed to have the matter referred to an ad hoc committee rather than to a panel of judges. The committee concluded that a heresy trial would be widely viewed as a "throwback" to a previous century in which both church and state sought to penalize "unacceptable opinion." A trial would thus give ECUSA an "oppressive image." The members of the committee did say, however, that they rejected "the tone and manner" of the Bishop's statements, and that they wished to dissociate themselves from many of his comments. Pike's utterances were, they said, "irresponsible" for one holding episcopal office. The bishops then censured Bishop Pike; but, despite the fact that he did not renounce his heresy, they also did nothing to inhibit him in the exercise of his office. It would appear, then, that the Bishop's fault was a certain degree of irresponsibility and a lack of tact rather than false doctrine.

For a group of bishops who opposed Bishop Pike's censure, ECUSA's willingness even to consider punishment of the Bishop was indefensibly reactionary. In a minority report, they gave voice with stark clarity to the new, explicitly liberal self-image of the Episcopal Church. "We believe it is more important to be a sympathetic and self-conscious part of God's action in the secular world than it is to defend the positions of the past, which is a past that is altered by each new discovery of truth." Here the doctrine of the Trinity became something to be abandoned by progress. Bishop Pike was viewed not negatively, as a heretic, but positively, as "a casualty of the Christian mission in our day."

Throughout this struggle, all sides sought to present ECUSA as an enlightened denominational option on the American religious scene. In this struggle can also be seen the birth of the notion that episcopal office is to be used as a "prophetic" lever to pry people loose from the incrusted positions of the past. This notion of episcopal office appeared in even more pronounced form during the battle over the ordination of women during the 1970s.

Now, I should be clear that I am a staunch, even fierce, supporter of the ordination of women. However, the way in which the practice was introduced into ECUSA has (sadly) served both to weaken its structures of order and authority and to further strengthen its self-identity as an "enlightened" denominational alternative.

In 1974, after the General Convention had twice refused to approve the ordination of women to the priesthood, three retired bishops ordained eleven women deacons as priests. The reason given by the bishops was that their act was an "obedient" and "prophetic" protest against oppression and an act of solidarity with the oppressed. Once more there was an attempt to bring the offending bishops to trial, but once again the attempt was foiled. The matter was referred at various times and in various ways both to the House of Bishops and to a special committee. The bishops decried the action and went on at a later date to censure the bishops involved. The special committee found that the offending bishops were in fact guilty of canonical offenses, and that their acts involved "teaching publicly a doctrine contrary to that held by the Church." Further, the committee posed in clear terms a fundamental question of "whether this Church's understanding of the nature of the Church and the authority of the episcopate permits individual bishops, appealing solely to their consciences, to usurp the proper functions and other duly constituted authorities in this Church." Another advisory committee put the matter even more pointedly by declaring that "a bishop is not free to appropriate the sacramental structure of the Church to his own views."

Despite these admonitions, warnings, and actions, however, in October 1975 Bishop George Barrett ordained four more women deacons to the priesthood. The women involved stated that they took their action because waiting for the General Convention to give approval to women's ordination would affirm in principle the concept that discrimination against women to the priesthood may be practiced in the Church until the majority changes its mind and votes. Once more a leading cultural trend, this time women's rights, showed itself as the dominant force within ECUSA's common life. Once more, a majority of ECUSA bishops decried what had been done, but acceded to its legitimacy by failing to take effective disciplinary action.

Looking back over the history that stretched from the "Pike affair" to the struggle over the ordination of women, one can see by the end of the process certain things firmly in place—ECUSA's espousal of enlightened culture and progressive cultural trends, the use of episcopal office to further "prophetic causes," and the inability of the governing structures and authorities of ECUSA to restrain independent action on the part of its bishops. All these factors revealed themselves plainly when, in 1977, just two years after Bishop Barrett's blatant defiance of his fel-

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low bishops, Bishop Paul Moore of the Episcopal Diocese of New York ordained a professed and practicing lesbian to the priesthood. In response, the House of Bishops did no more than express "disapproval" of Bishop Moore's action. The next General Convention, which met in 1979, passed a resolution that asserted that "it is not appropriate for this Church to ordain a practicing homosexual or any person who is engaged in heterosexual relations outside marriage."

On the surface, it appeared as if the General Convention had legislated against the practice initiated by Bishop Moore. But appearances can be deceiving. The resolution that labeled these practices "inappropriate" began with the phrase, "We recommend." Twenty dissenting bishops immediately signed a letter saying that they took the action of the General Convention to be "recommendary and not prescriptive." These twenty bishops also announced that in the name of "apostolic leadership" and "prophetic witness" they would not implement the resolution in their dioceses.

It is unlikely that the General Convention resolution was intended to do no more than recommend against a practice, but over time political forces within ECUSA have in fact managed to establish the resolution as "recommendary" rather than "prescriptive." In 1989, 1990, and 1991 the Episcopal dioceses of Newark and Washington, D.C., ordained open and practicing homosexuals to the priesthood. The justification for these ordinations was "new experience" and "new learning" that serves to "contextualize" the negative biblical witness. The ordination of sexually active homosexual persons then became a "justice issue" that had to be furthered by a "prophetic" episcopate. In the face of these claims, it is perhaps not surprising that charges of heresy later brought against Bishop Walter Righter of Newark were turned down on the grounds that the Bishop's action was not contrary to the "core doctrine" of the Episcopal Church.

After the Righter trial, the way was open for bishops to ordain sexually active homosexual persons if they so chose. It was clear that no disciplinary consequences would follow. It was at this point that the policy of a bishop or diocese to ordain or not to ordain, to bless or not to bless, came to be known within Episcopal circles as the "local option." It was asserted, quite rightly, that "local option" is the de facto practice of ECUSA. The election of Gene Robinson to succeed the present Bishop of New Hampshire was thus only the most radical assertion of a policy that has been firmly in place with respect to ordinations and blessings since the time of the Righter trial. Not only was it now permissible within ECUSA for clergy and bishops to be openly gay, not only was it permissible to bless gay unions, it was also the case that these novelties were hailed by their supporters as evidence that God is "doing a new thing." The cultural recognition and integration of gay and lesbian people into the American mainstream was interpreted as an act of God. The Episcopal Church, according to this view, was taking a lead in calling attention to God's work in history and giving prophetic support to divine providence.

It is possible that people from outside ECUSA who oppose these measures will at this point simply throw up their hands and say that this is what we would expect from Episcopalians, who have always been a little long on style and short on substance. A reaction of this sort might provide some self-satisfaction, but it would miss the significance for the rest of the churches in America of what has happened in the Episcopal Church. The Robinson election in fact serves to highlight challenges that all American churches currently face, be they Catholic, Orthodox, "mainstream" Protestant, Evangelical, or Charismatic. I speak of the subversion of Christian belief and practice by the logic of autonomous individualism, and the churches' transformation into simulacra. Make no mistake: what has happened in ECUSA is not a problem limited to a once (overly) proud denomination. Rather, it provides an exemplary case study of the subversion and transformation that, in one way or another, threatens all American denominations today.

Alasdair MacIntyre's account of the tradition of liberalism in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* provides a useful description of its career in American life. The economic and political cultures of the United States plainly descend from this tradition, and it is clearly this tradition that currently brings its force to bear on all traditional forms of Christian belief and practice. MacIntyre notes that the tradition of liberalism cannot allow for a single notion of the good to dominate "the public square," since liberal society must remain morally and theologically neutral. What one can express in public are not notions of good, but rather *preferences*. Of course, some way must be found to order preferences both in respect to individual life and to social policy. No rational way can be found to achieve this goal, however, because there is no common notion of the good to which public appeal can be made. Hence, one establishes preferences in the public arena primarily by bargaining. Everything in private as well as public life becomes a "trade-off." Social life becomes a sort of free trade zone for preferences.

The dominance in America of a liberal social economy gives us ample reason to regard the Robinson election and the acceptance of gay blessings as more than an Episcopalian anomaly. Within a liberal social economy, the notion of moral agency gives particular signifi-

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cance to issues of sexual preference and sexual satisfaction, since such a society's members think of themselves not as inhabitants of a pre-established moral order but as *individuals* who are utterly unique, as *selves* that have particular personal histories and needs, and as *persons* who have rights that allow them to express their individuality and pursue their personal well-being. For moral agents who think of themselves as *individuals*, *selves*, and *persons*, sexuality becomes, along with money, both a marker of identity and a primary way of expressing the preferences that define identity.

It is precisely this sexualized notion of moral agency and personal identity that makes the Robinson election so predictable. Here is a unique *individual*, who is a *self* with a particular history, and a *person* with a right to express his preferences and put his talents to work in the social world he inhabits. To deny him that right on the basis of sexual preference is to deny his personal identity. This notion of moral agency also makes understandable why the issues of abortion and euthanasia take their place alongside self-chosen sexual expression as centers of moral controversy both within the churches and without. At the heart of each of these arguments lies the characterization of moral agents as *individuals*, *selves*, and *persons* who have the right to pursue their own preferences, whatever they may be.

In the culture wars that rage over abortion, euthanasia, and sexuality, defenders of more traditional Christian teaching and practice often miss the fact that they must confront American culture on a deeper level than any of these specific issues. If they are to be effective, they must take on the very way in which Americans think of themselves as moral agents. The "socio-logic" that stands behind ECUSA's recent action beckons thinking to a deeper level than the sad history of this church's search for a distinctive place on the spectrum of American denominationalism. It tempts Christians to adopt a vision of moral and social life that runs counter to the very foundations of Christian thought and practice. And it raises the question of whether we inhabit a moral universe governed by an order we are called upon to understand and to which we are required to conform, or whether that universe is a mere product of preference-pursuing *individuals*, *selves*, and *persons* who create a social world suited to their self-defined goals through an elaborate process of moral bargaining.

While it is important to recognize the influence of these social forces, it is also important that we not explain the recent actions of ECUSA solely in terms of them. Christians throughout the ages have faced social forces that threaten to compromise the truth they have been given to live and proclaim, but they have not always succumbed to them. To think well about what is happening in ECUSA one must ask why the sirens of modernity have sung so sweetly in its ears.

It is my belief that a religious rather than a historical or sociological answer must be given to this question. As the English theologian P. T. Forsythe once wrote, "If within us we have nothing above us we soon succumb to what is around us." The history recounted above suggests that the internal life of ECUSA may well lack a transcendent point of reference—one that can serve as a counter-balance to the social forces that play upon it. A certain emptiness at the center is suggested also by an analysis of the theology that currently dominates ECUSA's pulpits. The standard sermon in outline runs something like this: "God is love; God's love is inclusive; God acts in justice to see that everyone is included; we therefore ought to be co-actors and co-creators with God to make the world over in accordance with inclusivity."

Here is *the* theological projection of a society built upon preference—one in which the inclusion of preference within common life is the be-all and end-all of the social system. ECUSA's God has become the image of this society. Gone is the notion of divine judgment (save upon those who may wish to exclude someone), gone is the notion of radical conversion, gone is the notion of a way of life that requires dying to self and rising to newness of life in conformity with God's will. In place of the complex God revealed in Christ Jesus, a God of both judgment and mercy, a God whose law is meant to govern human life, we now have a God who is love and inclusion without remainder. The projected God of the liberal tradition is, in the end, no more than an affirmer of preferences. This view of God is, furthermore, acted upon by an increasing number of ECUSA's clergy, who now regularly invite non-baptized people to share in the Holy Eucharist. It's just a matter of hospitality—of welcoming difference. An inclusive God, it would seem, requires an inclusive sacramental system as well.

Jews have always held that idolatry is the greatest of all sins. In the end, the actions of ECUSA must be traced to idolatry, to the creation of a God made in our own image. It is this observation that brings me to my final remark. As I write, the chief bishops of the various provinces of the Anglican Communion are preparing to go to England to meet with the Archbishop of Canterbury. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss what ought to be the response of the Anglican Communion to ECUSA's action. A majority of the bishops of the global South believe that some form of discipline must be imposed upon ECUSA if the Anglican Commu-

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nion is to maintain its claim to apostolicity and catholicity. Contrary to the assertions of many liberal Episcopal clergy and bishops, the concern of the bishops from the global South does not stem from the fact that they have not as yet lived through the Enlightenment. It stems rather from a perception that a form of idolatry has infected ECUSA and that this infection has led to forms of gross disobedience that compromise not only Anglican but Christian identity.

Only time will tell whether ECUSA's Presiding Bishop will manage to convince these more orthodox bishops that an international "local option" is the enlightened way for the Anglican Communion as a whole. The attempt will certainly be made. It is entirely likely, however, that the bishops of the global South will say to ECUSA that membership in the Anglican Communion requires conformity to the faith and practice of a worldwide fellowship of churches—even if that conformity runs against the grain of the culture in which Christians happen to find themselves. ECUSA will then have to decide if it wants to remain in its American denominational niche or if it wants to emphasize instead its identity as a church that is indeed part of a global communion. FT

Herod's Confusion

As her dance dissolves and smiling Salome
Sashays across the floor in smoky veils
To join her scheming mother, Herod sighs,
Seeing how foolishly he's just behaved—
Losing his head to such a vapid girl,
Whose liquid rippling of breasts and thighs
Writhing in time to pipes and throbbing drums
Had teased a promise from him worth a kingdom.

His feet still tapping on the marble floor,
He sees his bride Herodias convey
Her wishes to the girl, then Salome
Mincing across the tiles, at whose request
For John the Baptist's head served on a dish,
A knot of horror tightens in his chest.
He eyes his wife and stepchild with disgust,
Seeing how they, with threads of pride and lust,
Have tied him in a knot he can't escape.
Bound by his word to honor the girl's wish,
He issues orders curtly, to save face
Before his guards and guests . . . and only later,
As rumor of a new redeemer spreads,
Curses the witching music and wild dance
That tricked him from a world of consequence
Into a state where sad-eyed holy men
Whirl past in blurring veils of incarnation.

Paul Lake

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Keeping the Commandments

Robert Louis Wilken

Given the contentiousness of public life in America today it was inevitable that the bulky stone monument inscribed with the Ten Commandments and placed in the rotunda of the Supreme Court of the State of Alabama would provoke controversy. When Judge Roy S. Moore commissioned Richard Hahnemann to sculpt the monument he surely knew it would be provocative, though perhaps even he did not foresee that it would culminate in his suspension and the removal of the monument under court order. Not long ago the Decalogue was a venerable standard of morality acknowledged by all, but in recent decades the relentless levelers who would scrape American life clean of anything that bears the marks of particularity have mounted an aggressive campaign to depict the Ten Commandments as the arbitrary preferences of Jews and Christians, and hence to confine them to the private world of religious communities.

Yet the Ten Commandments can be read in several ways. In placing the Decalogue on a monument in the rotunda of the Supreme Court of Alabama, Judge Moore wished the commandments to be seen as the form in which a universal code of law has been promulgated, handed on, taught, and codified in the traditions on which this country is founded. Its source is nature's God, the creator and lawgiver, the transcendent author of moral wisdom. When men and women pass through the rotunda, whether Jewish or Christian, Muslim or Buddhist, agnostic or atheist, they are reminded that the laws of the land are guided by a moral law grounded in something other than convention, caprice, or imperiousness.

The same text of the Ten Commandments can be found in a wholly different setting. In many Episcopal churches built in the nineteenth century—for example, the Cathedral of St. Luke and St. Paul in Charleston, South Carolina—the Decalogue is inscribed on the walls of the apse. In this setting the commandments are presented and interpreted not as the work of the God of nature, but as the ordinances of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of biblical revelation, and the source of the commandments is identified—chapter 20 of the Book of Exodus. Understandably the commandments are flanked not by quotations from Thomas Jefferson or William Blackstone—as in Judge Moore's monument—but by the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. For those who read the words of the commandments on the wall of the Cathedral in Charleston, sometimes while kneeling, the Decalogue is presented not as a universal moral code, but as the law given to Moses and an exhortation to Christians. So important is the Decalogue that it is given prominence by placing it in the chancel facing the altar, where the Eucharist is celebrated and the cathedra, the chair of the bishop, is found. The 1928 *Book of Common Prayer* also prescribes that the Decalogue be read in the service at least one Sunday a month.

Though the text of the Decalogue in the rotunda of the Alabama Supreme Court and in the Cathedral are the same, those who turn their eyes to the commandments as they receive Communion will have a different sense of what they require than those who stop to read them in the rotunda of a state building.

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The Ten Commandments are traditionally divided into two "tables," the first including the invocation of God, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me," and the injunction to keep the Sabbath day holy, and the second the prohibitions against stealing, adultery, false witness, murder, and so forth. The secular critique of the public display of the commandments focuses in large measure on the first table. The second table is less controversial, though given the strident tone of the critics and their readiness to vandalize anything that has the authority of the past or of religious tradition, they would no doubt find some of the other commandments an affront as well (consider, for example, the prohibition against adultery).

The distinction between the two tables of the law, the first that enjoins duties to God, and the second that sets forth responsibilities to our fellow human beings, is very ancient and has been the staple of Christian instruction and exposition for centuries. In the *Institutes*, John Calvin wrote that "we ought to ponder what the division of the divine law into two Tables meant. . . . God has so divided His law into two parts, which contain the whole of righteousness, as to assign the first part of those duties of religion which particularly concern the worship of His majesty; the second, to the duties of love that have to do with men."

For most of the Church's history the distinction between the two tables was largely catechetical. During a brief period in British ecclesiastical history, however, the classical division between the two tables came to define two parties within the Church: the Puritans and the Anglicans. Although Anglicans and Puritans agreed on the authority of the Decalogue, and both parties thought that all the commandments were binding, they nevertheless disagreed as to where the emphasis should lie. Each accused the other of being "carvers"—that is, of carving out of the Ten Commandments what did not suit the interests of his party. The knife was applied at the cleavage between the first and second tables of the law. Puritans emphasized the commandments of the first table, duties towards God, and Anglicans, the commandments of the second table, duties to neighbor.

At first glance the controversy is puzzling. Neither Puritans nor Anglicans rejected the other table. The Anglicans were no less committed to the worship of the one true God, nor did Puritans eschew the prohibitions against adultery, stealing, or murder. Where one placed the accent defined what each party considered the "bosom sins." Yet there was a genuine fault line and it turned on the "natural" morality that was embodied in the second table. The moral code in the second table, it was argued, could be deduced by the use of natural reason.

The difference between Puritans and Anglicans is nicely illustrated in sermons from the period. In a funeral sermon preached in 1659 Thomas Pierce (an Anglican clergyman who rose to prominence after the Restoration) said, "Give me leave to tell you, what is not every day considered. The most material part of godliness is moral honesty. . . . The second table is the touchstone to our obedience to the first." Speaking of the deceased, Pierce went on to point out that he had been "sober and righteous"; hence he was also "godly" and put the lie to those who have only the form of godliness but lack its power.

In turn the Puritans responded that the Anglicans practiced an external virtue while ignoring the genuine worship of God. A good example is Richard Sibbes, master of St. Catherine's Hall, Cambridge University. The "rise of all sin against man is our sinning against God first. . . . The breach of the First Commandment is the ground of the breach of all the rest." For some the commandments were not so much divided into two tables as into a single First Commandment, worship of the true God, followed by the other nine. William Perkins said that "the ground of the nine later commandments is the first, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.'"

This controversy within the English Church, one of the few instances in the history of Christianity when there was a dispute over the Ten Commandments, shows that Christians have a stake in two different ways of interpreting and using them. On the one hand, the Decalogue can be viewed as a universal law applicable to all human beings, the norm for "civil righteousness" in the language of the seventeenth century. On the other hand, it can be treated as a guide for the Christian life, a set of precepts to lead the faithful into a more intimate relation to God. Neither excludes the other, yet each has its own distinctive character, logic, and application. Both can be traced back to the New Testament and the early Church.

Already in the second century the North African theologian Tertullian addressed the topic: "Why should God, the creator of the universe, the governor of the whole world, the fashioner of human beings, the world, the producer of all peoples, be believed to have given a law through Moses to one people and not to have assigned it to all people?" A reasonable question. Why should a law for all peoples be transmitted through Moses to the Israelites? Tertullian's answer is that the giving of the law to Moses was only one instance of promulgations of a universal moral law. According to the Old Testament, the law was given not once but many times and to different peoples, first to Adam and Eve (do not eat of the tree planted in the midst of paradise) and later in specific precepts written

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down by Moses on Mt. Sinai. However, before the law was given to Moses there was an "unwritten law" that was "understood naturally." As examples of those who knew the law before it was promulgated Tertullian mentions Noah, who was "found righteous," Abraham, and other figures in the Old Testament who lived before Moses. In Tertullian's view the law of Moses is not the original law from which all others derived, but the form in which the universal law was proclaimed to the Jewish people at a particular time. This is an argument that can be put to work in the present situation: even something that claims universality will inevitably have a particular origin.

Augustine makes a similar point, but his argument moves more along natural law lines. The law has been "written in our hearts" by our "fashioner," he says. Even before the law was given to Moses, human beings were not ignorant of it, because they were able to distinguish right from wrong and knew they were responsible for their actions. That is, an implicit ethical standard was built into human nature. At the same time it is not insignificant that the law was promulgated. "To take away from human beings any grounds for complaining that they had not been provided for, a law written on tablets was given. It stated what was already written in their hearts." Though the law was always there, written on the heart, people could willfully ignore it or claim it did not exist. However, when it was promulgated it stood before them as a reproach that could not be ignored, and men and women were forced to attend to its precepts.

The appearance of the phrase "written in their hearts" in Tertullian and Augustine is noteworthy. It is a reference to the second chapter of Romans, the most explicit statement of the authority of the natural law in the Scriptures. Paul writes: "When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness" (Romans 2:14-15).

Biblical scholars debate whether Paul is speaking here of the natural law, but Paul's argument is so similar to what one finds in other ancient sources, for example, Philo or Cicero, that resistance to such an interpretation seems to stem more from willfulness, the reluctance to acknowledge the presence of natural law in the Scriptures, than from careful exegesis. In any event, whatever the view of contemporary biblical scholars, Romans 2 was taken by the Church Fathers and medieval theologians to refer to the natural law.

In the *Summa*, Thomas Aquinas cites Romans 2 in his discussion of the moral precepts of the old law. The question was "whether all the moral precepts of the old law belong to the law of nature." Thomas responds: "On the contrary, the apostle says that the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law." His argument is that human morality is not arbitrary but depends on its relation to reason. Those acts we call good are in accord with reason. In some cases the precepts are self-evident, in other cases judgment and deliberation is required, and in yet others one needs to be helped by divine instruction. Nevertheless, all the moral precepts belong to the law of nature, "but not all in the same way." Significantly, Thomas does not draw a sharp line between things that are known by reason and those arrived at with the help of tradition or revelation, a point that is relevant to the use of the Decalogue in a pluralistic society. That something took form in a particular religious tradition does not place it beyond the bounds of reasonable discourse.

From earliest times, then, Christian thinkers have acknowledged that the law of Moses is not a law for the Jewish people alone, nor solely for Christians, but for all men and women. It is the form in which a universal law has been promulgated among the Jews and received later by Christians. In the present debate this would suggest that interpretation of the Decalogue in the rotunda of the Alabama Supreme Court is not alien to Christian tradition or thought, but one Christians of all confessions should applaud and step forward to defend.

Even though the law is written on the hearts of human beings, its promulgation in a specific code forces people to attend to it, reflect on it, and, one hopes, to act on it. It is unrealistic to think that any society can rely solely on the law written on the heart or relegate moral exhortation to the inner life of religious communities or to the conscience of the individual. The sentiments we read on public buildings or find inscribed on monuments and memorials are not abstractions, but concrete testimonies to the lives and convictions of those who have gone before us. As John Lukacs has reminded us, there is "recorded" history and also "remembered" history. The things we remember in our common life quietly convey a precious inheritance that helps us keep faith with the dead and form, in unspoken ways, the sensibilities and attitudes, not to say hopes and dreams, of those who will follow us. There is no greater betrayal than to impoverish a generation yet unborn by willful acts of amnesia. What we honor in our public life has a bearing on how we live as individuals.

In his testimony at the trial concerning the Alabama monument, Rabbi David Novak argued that we should not succumb to the argument that "secular" and "religious" are mutually exclusive terms. Mai-

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monides distinguished between those who accept commandments because of "natural inclination" and those who accept them because of divine revelation. Maimonides went on to say that whether for religious reasons or secular reasons, all persons, religious or not, can affirm the practical authority of the same commandments.

It should not be overlooked that the claim for the Decalogue's universality is not simply grounded in the argument that one can make a case from reason that stealing, adultery, and murder are wrong. Its precepts are also universal in that they reflect moral codes found in other religions. The most striking case is Buddhism. Within Buddhism there are lists of virtues and prohibitions that are remarkably similar to what is found in the Ten Commandments: not taking life, not taking what is not given, practicing sexual purity, speaking the truth, speaking gently, guarding one's word, refraining from slander, restraining covetous thoughts of others' wealth, avoiding thoughts of doing harm to others, sustaining the perfect vision. Buddhist kings made these virtues the center of political law.

The correspondence between this Buddhist list and the Ten Commandments gives strong support to the Christian and Jewish contention that the commandments are not simply the arbitrary and accidental preferences of the religious traditions of the West. Even in particulars they represent a broad moral consensus that embraces both West and East.

Nevertheless, one might argue that the particularity of the commandments of the first table makes the Decalogue unsuitable for our pluralistic society. The offending commands are, "Thou shalt have no other gods" and "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

The Sabbath command seems to me to pose the more difficult case. Though some would purge the name of God from our public life, the invocation of God is deeply rooted in our history, from the Declaration of Independence to oaths in court, to our coinage, to the Pledge of Allegiance, to proclamations on Thanksgiving, to Memorial Day celebrations, and to the religious language used by all our Presidents to this day. Because the Decalogue begins with a command to worship God, it appeals to a higher law than convention, to a standard that is beyond the power of states and people to abrogate. In the words of George Mason, which are quoted on Judge Moore's monument, "The laws of nature are the laws of God; whose authority can be superseded by no power on earth." Elimination of references to God in our public discourse is alien to American experience and the convictions of most Americans.

The command to remember the Sabbath is of a different order. Of course one might make the argument that any society needs a day of rest, a day unlike other days of the week, when schools and public offices are closed and life moves at a slower pace. (How sweet it is to drive city streets on a Sunday morning.) The command to keep the Jewish Sabbath could then be taken metaphorically to refer to any day of rest, and because of the history and customs of this country, that day is Sunday, the Christian sabbath.

That argument strikes me as strained and artificial. I think it better to acknowledge that every nation or people has a particular history, and the form in which the universal moral law comes to us is derived from Christian and Jewish tradition, that is from the Bible—the Christian Old Testament, the Jewish Torah. Just because some wish to put distance between themselves and the beliefs that formed us as a nation does not mean that all references to the particularity of our traditions must be wiped clean. Why should this history be considered offensive? To brand it as arbitrary is a haughty act of intellectual hubris, thin in substance and contemptuous of our ancestors. It also cuts against the grain of common sense. We are who we are because of our history. As Shakespeare wrote in *Henry V*, "There is a history in all men's lives."

We do not come at anything of worth except through history, and that applies as much to matters of morality as it does to our convictions about representative government, human rights, and religious freedom. What is to be gained by willfully afflicting the society with forgetfulness? A moral code constructed solely on the basis of our own reasonings without foundation in history would be abstract and antiseptic, and in the present cultural climate, a fantasy. Agreement could never be reached. The Ten Commandments are unique, a gift of our history that anchors our moral world more convincingly than anything that would be created anew. That the Decalogue is linked to a particular tradition with a specific historical origin is an argument in its favor, not against it. For Americans the Decalogue is not just "one religious code."

Which brings me to the use of the Ten Commandments within the churches. Christians recognize that the civic righteousness of the second table is hardly sufficient as a goal for the Christian life. The substance of the Decalogue, however, is presented in the New Testament, and in its particulars. Consider, for example, Romans 13:8: "Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,' and any other commandment are summed up in this sentence, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

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Though Paul knows and recalls Jesus' summary of the law, he is not content with generalities but spells out in some detail the specific commands that belong to the Decalogue. In Ephesians, he mentions "honor your father and mother" and adds the interesting commentary that this is the first commandment with a promise, "that it may be well with you." In 1 Timothy, Paul, or one of his disciples, refers to the "law," by which he means the Ten Commandments, as the list that follows makes clear. Most of them can be identified by the list of sinners, the unholy and profane, murderers of fathers and mothers, manslayers, sodomites, perjurers, or the works of the flesh, fornication, impurity, idolatry, and enmity. When complemented by the gifts of the spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness—they become a positive program rather than a simple list of prohibitions.

Following the New Testament, Christian writers in the second century took for granted that the commandments inscribed in the Decalogue are authoritative for Christians. The apologist Aristides, for example, presents the ideal Christian life by reference to the commandments of the Decalogue. Later, Augustine (who was the first to treat the Decalogue systematically in the context of Christian catechetics) brought the commandments into intimate relation with the life in Christ. In one sermon he refers to the Decalogue as God's harp, citing Psalm 144, "O God, I will sing You a new song, on a harp of ten strings I will play to You," and urges his congregation not to let the harp get out of tune. Elsewhere he interprets the Ten Commandments as tablets given by Christ to his bride, the Church. They are not the ordinances of a stern and distant judge but the loving gift of the bridegroom to his beloved. Given in love, they are not to be feared but embraced.

For Christians the Ten Commandments are much more than prohibitions imposed from without, negative commands having to do with what should be avoided in our external actions. They have to do not only with behavior but with attitudes and dispositions—that is, with the interior life. Recall the great meditation on the law, Psalm 119, a psalm Christians often ignore, partly because of its length, partly because of its repetitiveness, and partly because it has to do with law. What it says about law, however, is quite unconventional, one might even say un-lawlike. I am thinking not only of such verses as "Oh, how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day" or "I long for Thy commandments," but the accent on interiority. "I incline my *heart* to perform Thy statutes," a verse that occurs in several forms in the psalm. Psalm 119 forms a fitting backdrop to the words of Jesus: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

When we think of observing the law, of keeping the commandments, it is the will that first comes to mind. The psalmist surprises us by making our actions dependent not only on the will or the intellect but the heart, the affections. Only when the heart is inclined to God's law, only when we love God, can we make the commandments our own.

But perhaps the place to end is with Luther, from whom I first learned the commandments and their "explanations." Luther does not cite Psalm 119 in his two catechisms, but he prefaces his explanation of each commandment with the phrase, "We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things," sentiments that are also found in the psalm. After each commandment is recited, he asks, What does this mean?, and repeats the introductory formula. At "you shall not kill" he comments, "We should fear and love God, and so we should not endanger our neighbor's life." For Luther, the commandments have to do with an inner transformation, a change of "thought, word, and deed"—not only doing no harm to our neighbor, but treating him with patience, love, and kindness. Only when the heart "clings" to God and "entrusts" itself to God, says Luther, can we live as the commandments direct us. That, finally, is why the first and greatest commandment in the Scriptures is one that has no place on a public monument, but is to be burned into the hearts of each generation of the faithful: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." FT

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Remembering the Gulag

Lawrence A. Uzzell

Somewhere a young film student is reading Anne Applebaum's *Gulag: A History*, a magisterial survey of the Soviet labor-camp system, and someday he will do what nobody else has succeeded in doing—not even Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. He will produce a movie about the Gulag that finally puts it where it belongs in our public moral consciousness. Critics will compare his creation with *Schindler's List*, noting that his achievement is even greater because Steven Spielberg only had to tap into a consciousness of Nazi horrors already assiduously cultivated in our popular culture. As Applebaum notes in her introduction, American tourists in Eastern Europe eagerly buy old hammer-and-sickle badges to wear as souvenirs. Few would even think of wearing swastikas.

If this filmmaker really exists and is not just a figment of my hopes, he actually faces a greater challenge today than he would have a decade or two ago. Solzhenitsyn is now a marginal figure even in his own country, his books often hard to find in Moscow bookstores. Russia made only one official attempt at prosecuting deposed Communist Party leaders, a decade ago, and it was a bungled farce. Anticommunist rhetoric is now discredited by its association with the corrupt circle of Boris Yeltsin. Russia's current president is openly proud of his career as a KGB officer.

In America, the number of us who would even recognize the term "Gulag" is almost certainly smaller now than it was when Solzhenitsyn published his own pioneering history in the 1970s. Nazi killing grounds such as Auschwitz properly draw visits from political leaders, but few have visited such haunted Gulag sites as Perm or Magadan. The current White House is more willing to whitewash Kremlin atrocities, both past and present, than any presidential administration since Franklin D. Roosevelt's.

Such amnesia matters. For example, it is almost impossible to have a balanced conversation with today's Russians about Chechnya, conditioned as they are to think of the Chechens only as terrorists and of themselves only as victims. Few truly feel the weight of February 1944, when Stalin had the entire Chechen nation—an estimated 390,000 people—loaded onto train cars and shipped to the wastelands of Central Asia. As many as 78,000 may have died on the train trip alone. If today's Russians remembered such crimes as today's Germans remember those of their grandfathers—if they really felt them in their bones—the 1994 war on Chechnya would never have begun. It would certainly never have included such savage tactics as the carpet-bombing of downtown Grozny or the kidnapping and torture of Chechen civilians. As Applebaum observes, such a war would have been as unthinkable as an attack by postwar Germany on postwar Poland.

If our own leaders squarely faced these realities, we would of course still do business with Vladimir Putin as with other heads of other foreign states. But we would avoid giving him special recognition in the form of ceremonial audiences with Queen Elizabeth or intimate barbecues at the Bush ranch—unearned rewards that sully our proclamations about global freedom and fortify the Kremlin's lies to its own people.

GULAG: A HISTORY.
By Anne Applebaum.
Doubleday. 720 pp. $35.

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Though Russia is still a repressive country, currently becoming more so, the difference between today's repression and the classic Gulag is like the difference between Jim Crow and slavery. Applebaum chose her subtitle correctly: the Gulag is now a phenomenon of history. As such it can now be studied with a certain detachment—one of the major differences between Applebaum's work and Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* trilogy. His work was a flaming call to arms; hers is resigned, melancholy, even funereal. In addition to its impeccable scholarship, her book has a flavor of commemoration and eulogy, perhaps acquired from her sources and friends in Russia's "Memorial" society, which has done so much to preserve the Gulag's physical artifacts and to compile memoirs of ex-prisoners (it is a debt which she warmly acknowledges). Russia is a nation of grave-visitors, and some of that Russian spirit seems to have entered Applebaum's soul.

Indeed, for all of Solzhenitsyn's passionate anger his work is in some ways more optimistic than Applebaum's. Having personally been brought from atheism to Christianity by his experience in the camps, he offers a vision of purification through suffering—a vision inseparable from his Orthodox faith. More typical in today's post-Christian Russia is the vignette that Applebaum appropriately chose as the coda for her book. Sharing the ex-prisoner Lev Razgon's reflections on visiting the KGB headquarters in 1990 to review his own file, she notes "the ludicrous nature of the charges . . . the tragedy which befell his wife's mother . . . the opaque motives of his father-in-law . . . the strange absence of repentance on the part of those who had destroyed all of them. But what struck me most about his experience of working in the archives was his description of how ambivalent he felt."

She quotes Razgon's words:

> I have long since stopped turning the pages of the file and they have lain next to me for more than an hour, growing cold with their own thoughts. . . . I go downstairs, along the empty corridors, past the sentries who do not even ask to see my papers, and step out onto Lubyanka Square. . . . I stand on the pavement outside, wondering what to do next. How terrible that I do not believe in God and cannot go into some quiet little church, stand in the warmth of the candles, gaze into the eyes of Christ on the Cross. . . . I am eighty-two and here I stand, living through it all again. . . . I hear the voices of Oksana and her mother. . . . I can remember and recall them, each one. And if I remained alive, then it is my duty to do so.

Applebaum artfully interweaves such scenes with meticulous analysis of statistics. Of course she has far more tools to work with than Solzhenitsyn did, even though many archives remain closed and many officials tight-lipped. She clearly spent hundreds of hours listening to former prisoners, former guards, and local researchers in some of the most inaccessible parts of Russia in the far north and far east. (She emphasizes her Russian sources' generosity with their time and information, but not what must be her own considerable gifts as a listener.) Her massive annotations range from the Hoover Institution in California to state archives in Moscow to local collections in places such as Arkhangelsk and Vorkuta.

Gulag, a typically ugly Soviet acronym, stands for "Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei," or "Main Administration of Camps"—the special section created within the secret police in the early Stalin years as they took full control of the country's labor camps and prisons from the Commissariat of the Interior. (The rivalry between the secret police and the Ministry of the Interior continues to this day, with the former now gaining ground again.) Though some Western leftists still cling to the myth that the camp system was a uniquely Stalinist perversion, it began under Lenin, who in 1918 suggested arresting "saboteurs" and "sentencing them to half a year's forced labor in a mine." The system shrank considerably after Stalin's death but survived almost as long as the Soviet Union did. Only in the 1990s could one finally say that there were no political prisoners in Russia. (Sadly, one can no longer say this today.) The Soviet Gulag thus ranks as one of the longest-enduring totalitarian institutions of modern times—though its offspring in China and North Korea may still surpass it.

During its long life the system was far from stable, and Applebaum provides a nuanced account of its qualitative and quantitative changes. She does her best with the statistical data now available, warning that they are not complete enough to give us what we really want: "a single round number of dead victims." In fact, she somewhat overstates this problem. Though a precise, agreed-upon figure would be most welcome, we do not need such a figure in order to know whether Lenin's disciples killed more than Hitler's did, just as we do not need a full-scale census to tell us whether China is more populous than America. It is, and they did.

Most of those deaths were not directly caused by the labor camps; as Applebaum observes, what one really wants to know "is how many people died, unnecessarily, as a result of the Bolshevik Revolution. That is, how

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many died in the Red Terror and the Civil War, the famines which followed in the wake of the brutal policy of collectivization, the mass deportations, the mass executions, the camps. . . . In that case the numbers are not only far larger, but they really are a matter of pure conjecture. The French authors of *The Black Book of Communism* quote a figure of twenty million deaths. Others cite numbers closer to ten or twelve million." One might add to these numbers a significant share of the deaths of World War II, in which the Soviet Union was one of the original aggressors. Even that would omit the corpses of Communist China, Southeast Asia, North Korea and Cuba—further scores of millions, with the killing still not over.

But Applebaum's chosen topic is more than enough for seven hundred pages, and she rightly sticks to it. She finds some of the figures made available by the partial opening of Soviet archives—figures not originally intended for public consumption—to be surprisingly consistent and reliable. The secret police compiled a tally of total Gulag inmates on January 1 of each year. In 1930 the number was 179,000; it surged in the late 1930s, reaching almost two million in 1941. It fell during the war as inmates were released for military service, but spiked again with Stalin's postwar crackdown and reached its all-time peak of about 2.5 million in 1950. What makes these figures misleading, however, is that "they mask the camp system's remarkably high turnover," with new prisoners constantly arriving and old ones leaving—or dying. Applebaum endorses British scholar Edwin Bacon's calculation of a cumulative total of eighteen million Soviet citizens passing through the system between 1929 and 1953—the year of Stalin's death. To that figure she adds foreign prisoners of war; Russian émigrés and displaced persons captured by the Red Army in central Europe; Soviet prisoners of war "liberated" from their German captors and then immediately sentenced for treason; Soviet citizens sentenced to forced labor outside the camps; and the millions of Balts, Chechens, and other suspect minorities exiled en masse to Siberia and Central Asia. Putting all these together, she estimates that "the total number of forced laborers in the USSR comes to 28.7 million."

How many of these slave laborers actually died? Applebaum "reluctantly" cites another historian's 1997 estimate of about 2.7 million, derived from incomplete official sources. The "Memorial" society's researchers are trying to produce a reliable count of Gulag deaths. But even if they should succeed, their figure would not include the hundreds of thousands of political executions that took place outside the camps. There were also those who died under interrogation before even being sentenced; the massive fatalities on the overcrowded, disease-ridden, and sometimes even unheated trains that carried prisoners to the camps; and the many who were technically no longer prisoners when they died, having been released just beforehand by camp commanders who knew that they were already on their last legs.

Applebaum eloquently reminds us that no numerical count can "really tell the whole story of suffering. . . . No official figures, for example, can possibly reflect the mortality of the wives and children and aging parents left behind. . . . During the war, old people starved to death without their ration cards: had their convict son not been digging coal in Vorkuta, they might have lived. Small children succumbed easily to epidemics of typhus and measles in cold, ill-equipped orphanages: had their mothers not been sewing uniforms in Kengir, they might have lived too." Even when they did not die, such children were far more likely to be drawn into criminal gangs. A prisoner's other relatives would often "cut off all contact from one another, in order to avoid being tainted as well. Families broke apart, friendships ended, fear weighed heavily on those who remained behind."

What was in the souls of those who ordered such suffering? That question needs to be studied on several levels, from the ethics of Marxist ideology to the strategy of the Soviet political elite to the motivations of the system's bureaucrats and guards. Intellectual history, political history, and social history all meet in the Gulag. One would expect a researcher working just after the collapse of the system to concentrate on the political and social threads, about which a flood of new information is now available, and that is just what Applebaum does. Was the Gulag essentially the product of a master plan, or was its explosive growth in the 1930s a result of ad hoc responses to circumstances created by other Soviet policies, such as agricultural collectivization? (Before World War II most of the Gulag's inmates were peasants.) Were the labor camps intended to be self-sustaining, to yield a profit for the Soviet economy—and if so did they succeed? Did the top authorities demand new waves of mass arrests in order to meet the needs of the camps, or did they build new camps in order to create dumping grounds for people whom they intended to arrest in any case? Did they consciously intend the death rates to be as high as they were; for example, did they intend the Kolyma mining camps to function as killing machines in which the average prisoner assigned to heavy labor without extra rations or other special privileges was likely to die?

Applebaum definitively answers some of these questions and lays the groundwork for future historians to

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pursue others. From Politburo and other records it is clear that Stalin took an intense personal interest in the Gulag. He demanded detailed reports on "inmate productivity," especially in the Kolyma gold mines, and about particular groups of prisoners such as secessionists from western Ukraine. He often ordered heads of individual camps to visit Moscow to answer questions in person. He even sometimes read petitions from individual prisoners, taking it on himself to decide whether to release them.

Stalin was of course a secular utopian and materialist, and Applebaum seems to have found no evidence that he ever had any moral scruples or hesitations about the Gulag. The same may be said of his comrades in power. A 1928 Politburo commission with representatives from various organs of the young Soviet government made recommendations about creating a mass "system of concentration camps" along the lines of those that the secret police had already established on the far-northern Solovetsky Islands. The commission's minutes record objections from some quarters—all based on practical considerations such as transportation difficulties, none on ethical grounds.

On a more personal level, Stalin had what Applebaum calls an "obsessive interest in vast construction projects and toiling teams of forced laborers." He "enjoyed the sight of large numbers of human bodies, marching or dancing in perfect synchronization. He was captivated by the ballet, by orchestrated exhibitions of gymnastics, and by parades featuring giant pyramids built out of anonymous, contorted human figures. Like Hitler, Stalin was also obsessed with the cinema, particularly Hollywood musicals, with their enormous casts of coordinated singers and dancers." This taste seems to have converged with an equally obsessive focus on certain aspects of Russian history, such as the way Peter the Great worked prisoners and serfs to death three centuries ago in order to build a glorious new capital city on swampland. (One might note that Peter seems to be Solzhenitsyn's least admired czar, and the one Putin admires most.)

In its early years the Gulag grew somewhat haphazardly, with frequent course changes and reversals. For example, the secret police would declare amnesties to solve overcrowding but then flood the camps with new arrests. It was, Applebaum writes, "as if Stalin and his henchmen were never quite sure if they wanted the system to grow or not—or as if different people were giving different orders at different times." But in the end she comes down on the side of what she calls "a growing consensus" among today's researchers "that Stalin himself had, if not a carefully designed plan, then at least a very firm belief in the enormous advantages of prison labor, which he maintained until the end of his life." Though she does not put it quite this way, the labor camps were the ultimate planned economy—the logical extreme of the Soviet adventure as a whole.

From the late 1920s onward, the Gulag was clearly intended to be an economic asset. Applebaum notes of the Politburo's closed-door deliberations that "all of the participants used fiercely economic language. All expressed the same concerns about 'profitability' and spoke frequently about 'rational use of labor.'" Applebaum discusses scattered evidence that arrests were sometimes planned with economic goals in mind. For instance, a 1934 letter from the head of the secret police to his subordinates demanded fifteen to twenty thousand prisoners "fit to work" on a canal construction project. She also sees a pattern in the sentences of engineers, geologists, and other technical specialists: "Perhaps it was not sheer accident that the very first group of prisoners sent to the new camps in the Kolyma gold fields included seven well-known mining experts."

Against such seeming rationality must be set what Applebaum calls the "almost ludicrous inefficiency" of Soviet practice:

> Every wave of mass arrests seems to have caught the camp commanders by surprise, making it difficult for them to achieve even a semblance of economic efficiency. Nor did the arresting officers ever choose their victims rationally: instead of limiting arrests to the healthy young men who would have made the best laborers . . . they also imprisoned women, children, and old people in large numbers. The sheer illogic of the mass arrests seems to argue against the idea of a carefully planned labor force—leading many to conclude that arrests were carried out primarily to eliminate Stalin's perceived enemies, and only secondarily to fill Stalin's camps.

Nevertheless, once prisoners were in custody the Gulag tried to organize their lives in such a way as to get maximum work out of them. The system of food norms was designed for economic purposes; in its first systematic use in the 1920s, it gave the frailest prisoners half as much food as those deemed capable of heavy labor. "In practice," notes Applebaum, "the system sorted prisoners very rapidly into those who would survive, and those who would not. . . . Deprived of food, the weak prisoners grew weaker, and eventually became ill or died." The "commercialization" of the camps took other forms as well. The pioneering Solovetsky Islands camp complex led the way by

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"slowly discarding everything that did not contribute to the camps' economic productivity," such as the journals and newspapers produced by the prisoners as well as "all pretense of reeducation."

Applebaum makes it undeniably clear that in spite of this commercialization, the Gulag never became profitable; indeed, financially it was a net drain. Slave laborers could not be made to work as productively as the "free" ones outside of the camps and of course the camp system required extra expenditures on guards and the like. The system also diverted resources to gargantuan projects that would have been economically pointless even if labor costs had been zero, such as canals and railroads built by Gulag slaves in remote areas with no hope of commercial traffic. But in this as in other areas, Stalin stubbornly denied economic reality. To the very end of his life, he believed either that the camps were already economic assets or that they could be made to be. Almost immediately after his death the Soviet government canceled some of his most irrational projects.

Characteristically, Stalin and his circle tried to improve the Gulag's productivity with top-down administrative decrees. Some of these were actually less harsh to prisoners than the practices they tried to change. Even Lavrenty Beria, head of the secret police during its cruelest period, realized that high death rates could be economically inefficient. But, just as characteristically, the Soviet bureaucracy found creative ways to circumvent such decrees. The system was riddled with corruption; embezzling of food and other items intended for the prisoners was commonplace. The most idealistic Communists (there were still many of them in the 1930s) seem to have shunned assignments in the Gulag administration, which was seen as a dumping ground for mediocrities and drunkards.

In practice the Gulag was far less of a tightly run, centralized machine than one might think. Applebaum notes that camp commanders and their staffs had considerable discretion in deciding how to run their domains—"far more than their Nazi counterparts, whose work was more rigidly defined." A camp boss could work to make sure that his inmates had blankets, proper shoes, and clean barracks; or he could simply neglect such matters; or he could devote maximum energy, as some did, to providing a life of luxury for himself. In her interviews and reading of memoirs, Applebaum found the dominant pattern to have been not deliberate cruelty but sloppy, callous indifference. She recounts some episodes of camp commanders who treated their charges decently but makes it clear that these were rare exceptions; most were simply guided by self-interest. A commander could be punished for being too kind or for being excessively, sadistically cruel—but the great majority stayed within safe boundaries.

Paradoxically, Applebaum senses this indifference even in the internal reports of the Gulag inspectorate. "Remarkable for their honesty . . . they report on camps where death rates are 'too high.' They angrily accuse particular camp commanders of providing unsuitable living conditions. . . . Reading them, one can have no doubt that the Gulag bosses in Moscow knew—really and truly knew—what life was like in the camps; it is all there, in language no less frank than that used by Solzhenitsyn." And yet, she finds that "what is striking about the reports is their very repetitiveness: they call to mind the absurd culture of phony inspection so beautifully described by the nineteenth-century Russian writer Nikolai Gogol. It is as if the forms were observed, the reports were filed, the ritual anger was expressed—and the real effects on human beings were ignored. Camp commanders were routinely reprimanded for failing to improve living standards, living standards continued to fail to improve, and there the discussion ended."

In reading Applebaum's comparisons of the Soviet and Nazi camps, one wonders about cultural differences as well as ideological ones and is even tempted to counterfactual fantasy: What if Marxists had first come to power in Germany rather than Russia? Would German Communists have built a highly disciplined, ruthlessly efficient camp system—like the one that was in fact built by the German Nazis—rather than the slipshod Russian version? Applebaum herself is too restrained to indulge in such speculations. She properly notes a major distinction between the actual Nazi and Soviet camp systems: the latter did not include purpose-designed extermination camps with mass murder as their sole function—places where almost all newly arrived prisoners were sent directly into gas chambers to be killed as quickly as possible. But she also notes that the Soviet regime had no principled objection to mass executions—it merely did not use the Gulag for this purpose. Hundreds of thousands fell victim to such Soviet executions: "Usually, they were driven to a forest at night, lined up, shot in the skull, and buried in mass graves before they ever got near a concentration camp—a form of murder no less 'industrialized' and anonymous than that used by the Nazis."

Mass shootings are less efficient than gas chambers, but no less evil. We can be reasonably sure that an indigenous German Communist regime would have been less chaotic than the Soviet Union—but not at all that it would have been more merciful.

The term "chaotic" may seem inappropriate for a

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totalitarian state. But Applebaum's account makes it clear that day-to-day life in the Gulag was a lottery. A prisoner's survival and sanity depended mostly on his local circumstances, including circumstances not directly controlled by his camp commander. A full account of the Gulag must include the relationships between the political prisoners—those sentenced for disloyalty to the Soviet regime—and the thieves, rapists, and others convicted for activities that would be considered crimes anywhere. (Note, however, that there was nothing unusual about trumped-up "criminal" sentences for political enemies, both real and imagined.) One of the Gulag's diabolically cruel features was that it consciously placed nonviolent political offenders at the mercy of thugs. The fact that these thugs were usually from the lower depths of society was from the Bolshevik standpoint an extra attraction. They were considered "socially close" to the vanguard of the proletariat, while the "socially dangerous" political offenders were in effect dehumanized in much the same way that the Nazis dehumanized Jews.

For the newly sentenced political prisoner—often a mild-mannered intellectual or a bewildered peasant—a common experience was to be thrust into a railroad car with hardened criminals who would attack immediately. The criminals, Applebaum writes, "would descend upon the other prisoners in what appeared to be a mad fury, throwing them off their bunks . . . stealing what remained of their clothing; howling, cursing." Political prisoners, even military veterans, usually felt so isolated and disoriented that they meekly gave in. The situation might improve once the prisoners reached their camp, where sometimes the political prisoners managed to band together against the criminals—but it also might get worse. Guards often disappeared to the camp perimeter at night, leaving the barracks area as a zone of anarchy where the strong could prey on the weak. Gang rapes, both of women and of adolescent boys, were not unusual. The criminals built alliances with the camp bosses, who used them to keep order and to allocate rations and work assignments.

Though the criminals' power shrank in the postwar years, as the Gulag administration increasingly realized that they were more harmful than helpful to economic productivity, they remained a major element of Gulag life. Their subculture, with its grotesquely inverted rules of behavior, has taken on a new vigor in today's hyper-criminalized Russia. The Soviet police state, with its own inverted values, ended up directly nurturing crime.

Applebaum recounts how hard it was for her to find memoirs of people who had been in the Gulag as children, even though there had been tens of thousands of such prisoners. She thought about advertising in a newspaper for interview subjects, but a Russian friend warned her that the most common fate for such survivors was to become full-fledged criminals. Applebaum quotes a woman prisoner who worked in a camp nursery and who found that even four-year-olds had never learned to talk: "Inarticulate howls, mimicry, and blows were the main means of communication." Mothers who had been arrested with their infants (or who gave birth while imprisoned) were usually denied all contact with them except a few grudging minutes for breast-feeding.

The normal practice was eventually to transfer such children to the Soviet state's regular orphanages—"overcrowded, dirty, understaffed, and often lethal"—and many lost all contact with their parents. Another tragedy might await those mothers who eventually managed to find their children. One woman, "released after an eight-year sentence, went to get her children from the orphanage, only to find that they refused to go with her. They had been taught that their parents were 'enemies of the people' who deserved no love."

In yet another example of the Gulag's slipshod administration, investigators repeatedly complained about the practice of housing adolescent prisoners in camps for adults, contrary to Moscow's instructions. Ex-prisoner Lev Razgon recalled of these youths that "the horror of what had happened had deprived them of all defenses," and that the adult criminal prisoners found it easy to recruit and corrupt them. They soon "displayed a frightening and incorrigibly vengeful cruelty, without restraint or responsibility. . . . The guards and camp bosses were scared to enter the separate barracks where the juveniles lived. It was there that the vilest, most cynical, and cruel acts that took place in the camps occurred. . . . The girls boasted that they could satisfy an entire team of tree-fellers. There was nothing human left in these children and it was impossible to imagine that they might return to the normal world and become ordinary human beings again."

Adults of course could also be corrupted by the Gulag—but they could also be ennobled. The memoirists who seem to resonate most with Applebaum are those like Razgon, with their feelings of emptiness and futility. Such feelings are probably much more common among Gulag survivors than Solzhenitsyn's—perhaps one reason for the latter's loss of popularity. But Solzhenitsyn is not the only survivor to look back on his Gulag years not as an utter waste but as a gift, even a blessing. His trilogy includes a section, "The Soul and Barbed Wire," which I think will still be read centuries from now as a classic of prison literature, long after our descendants have lost interest in the details of Soviet politics. Per-

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haps it will even be excerpted and anthologized separately, like the Grand Inquisitor speech in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Solzhenitsyn talks about "the great fork of camp life" where two roads diverge. "If you go to the right—you lose your life, and if you go to the left—you lose your conscience." He admits with sorrow that most prisoners did not choose the right fork. He mentions by name several who did, including his former cellmate, an Estonian lawyer—and others whom he knew by reputation such as an indomitable, repeatedly arrested schoolteacher.

Once "you have renounced that aim of 'surviving at any price,' and gone where the calm and simple people go," writes Solzhenitsyn, "imprisonment begins to transform your former character in an astonishing way." It gives you, unwelcome at first, time to think. Previously "you were sharply intolerant. You were constantly in a rush. And you were constantly short of time. And now you have time with interest. You are surfeited with it, with its months and years, behind you and ahead of you—and a beneficial calming fluid pours through your blood vessels—patience."

Solzhenitsyn had a long conversation in a Gulag hospital with an imprisoned doctor, a new convert to Christianity. He quotes what Dr. Boris Kornfeld told him: "There is no punishment that comes to us in this life on earth which is undeserved. Superficially it can have nothing to do with what we are guilty of in actual fact, but if you go over your life with a fine-tooth comb and ponder it deeply, you will always be able to hunt down that transgression of yours for which you have now received this blow."

Those words—among the doctor's last on earth, for another prisoner murdered him the next day—planted the seeds for Solzhenitsyn's realization "that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart. . . . Even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained. And even in the best of all hearts, there remains an unuprooted small corner of evil."

Applebaum provides an evenhanded account of the continuing debate over Solzhenitsyn's stern views on the *pridurki* or trusties—prisoners who collaborated with the camp administration in return for various privileges. (Solzhenitsyn himself agreed to be one during his early, disoriented days of imprisonment—an experience, he writes, that "filled me with shame.") Some ex-prisoners defend this practice as the only way to survive if one was not accustomed to physical labor—and also as an opportunity (admittedly not taken by all) to help prisoners lower in the hierarchy. Solzhenitsyn's view is that being a trusty inevitably entangled one in a corrupt system that benefited some prisoners at the direct expense of others. In any case, there is reason to think that most long-term prisoners who survived were trusties during at least part of their sentences. Applebaum relays a survivor's account of a reunion of old camp friends. As they were reminiscing, "one of them looked around the room and realized what it was that held them together, what made it possible for them to laugh at the past instead of crying: 'All of us had been *pridurki*.'"

It seems that serious religious believers were less likely to become collaborators. Applebaum tells of a women's camp in which the majority of prisoners were believers, who organized so that the Orthodox would do extra work on the Roman Catholic holidays and vice versa, enabling both groups to celebrate their feasts. (This is consistent with what many believers have told me in Russia: oppression inspired a solidarity among the various confessions that sadly has not survived the end of the Soviet Union.) She recounts several cases in which members of minority faiths openly defied their jailers—such as a tiny group of Old Believers who had fled deep into the wilderness of the northern Urals in 1919 and managed to live there secretly for decades. They were finally discovered from the air and sent to the Gulag—where they became "permanent residents of the punishment cells, having categorically refused to work for the Soviet Antichrist."

Unfortunately, Applebaum fails to give due consideration to the story of the mainstream Orthodox, who produced tens of thousands of imprisoned bishops, priests, and monastics, as well as rank-and-file laymen. She fails to mention Aleksandr Ogorodnikov or Father Gleb Yakunin—two of the most heroic Gulag prisoners, who tenaciously spoke out for religious freedom not just for their fellow Orthodox but for all believers. Roman Catholics she sees largely through the lens of their ethnic identities as Poles or Lithuanians—a true picture but an incomplete one. On the Protestants she is somewhat stronger, reporting that the Khrushchev years, during which religious persecution was growing while other forms of repression were softening, saw the Baptists become "the largest single dissident group behind barbed wire."

Applebaum also appreciates the importance of the fact that the Solovetsky Islands prison—the model for the rest of the Gulag—was housed in an ancient Orthodox monastery. In its early years it specialized in housing imprisoned clerics, including seventeen bishops who in 1926 and 1927 issued two of the most unjustly neglected religious documents of the twenti-

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eth century, protesting the new regime's persecution of believers. In contrast to the collaborationist policies that were to become the hallmark of the Moscow Patriarchate, the imprisoned bishops proclaimed that "the Church will be ready for the material deprivations to which it could be subjected . . . remembering that its strength does not depend on the existence of an undamaged external structure."

In the summer of 2000 the Moscow Patriarchate canonized six of these Gulag bishops—a hopeful sign that the Patriarchate is finally, slowly coming to grips with its tainted past. It is as if the Lutheran Church in Germany had taken until the 1960s to honor anti-Nazi clerics such as Martin Niemoeller. But such signs are rare in today's Russia, which has no state-sponsored equivalents of the West's Holocaust museums. Secular symbols such as the national anthem are now growing more Sovietized rather than less—as is the school curriculum, from which Gulag victims such as the poets Anna Akhmatova and Osip Mandelstam are being squeezed out again after the brief renaissance of the 1990s. As Applebaum observes, the selective memory of Putin's Russia is impoverishing the country's political culture—depriving schoolchildren of the chance to be inspired by heroes who "ought to be as widely known in Russia as are, in Germany, the names of the participants in the plot to kill Hitler."

The failure to remember impoverishes the West as well. Applebaum wisely declares that "this book was not written 'so that it will not happen again.' . . . It almost certainly will happen again." Somewhere, not necessarily in Russia, we shall again have to stare tyranny and mass murder in the face. We can try to prepare ourselves not only by studying the eternal questions of good and evil, the "first things" of theology and political philosophy—but also by mapping the specific historical paths, each uniquely tortuous, of past exterminations. This splendid book contributes in innumerable ways to the latter project. FT

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A Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridegroom Christ

Where have you fled and vanished,
Beloved, since you left me here to moan?
Deer-like you leaped; then, banished
and wounded by my own,
I followed you with cries, but you had flown.

Shepherds, if you discover,
going about this knoll to tend your sheep,
the dwelling of that lover
whose memory I keep,
tell him I sicken unto death and weep.

To seek him, I shall scour
these trackless woods to where the rivers flow—
not stop to pick a flower,
not run from beasts—but go
past every fort and border that I know.

O forests darkly glooming,
seeded by my beloved's very hand!
O pasture richly blooming,
you flower-jeweled band!
I beg you, say if he has crossed your land.

Yes, with his thousand graces
streaming from him, he crossed these groves with speed,
and, glancing at these places—
with no more word or deed—
left them in his own beauty liveried.

Alas, who can content me?
Give yourself up to me, at last, entire;
nor send, as you have sent me,
those messengers you hire
who cannot tell me all that I desire.

And those who pass make clamor,
your thousand graces to my ear relaying,
wound me with words they stammer,
and kill me, ill-conveying
the who-knows-what that baffles all their saying.

But how do you persevere,
O life! in life not living, as you do,
pursued to death forever
by arrows that strike true,
aimed by that love the lover sows in you?

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And why, having arrived
home to my heart, not heal it with relieving?
Why, since you have deprived
me of it, leave it grieving,
rather than grasp the plunder of your thieving?

Extinguish all my plight,
since there is none but you alone to do it;
Be present to my sight,
Since you alone renew it,
and you alone, when seen, give value to it.

Be present, drop your veil,
and let me die your beauty apprehending;
this grief that makes me pale
with love, can have no ending
without your presence, every joy transcending.

O crystal fountain flowing,
if in your silver stream I might discern
them there, suddenly glowing—
those eyes that make me burn,
deep in my heart inscribed—for which I yearn!

Turn them, Beloved, from me,
or I must fly to find you!
Turn, my dove,
love's wound has overcome me;
Deer-like, I stand above,
cooled by the breezes stirred by wings of love.

My lover is the highlands,
he is the wooded valleys lone and deep,
the far, mysterious islands,
the streams that sing and leap,
whispering winds that court the fields they sweep,

the night whose stillness pleases
and ushers morning and the rising sun,
silence whose music eases,
music from silence spun,
and supper that delights when day is done.

Hunt the quick foxes finding
our vineyard, where the tender shoots abound,
while we make garlands, binding
the stems of roses round,
and let no man be seen on the high ground.

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Halt, you North wind, death-maker;
now come, wind from the South, by love beguiled,
breathe on my flowered acre,
spreading your fragrance mild,
and my Lover shall graze where blooms grow wild.

O, you Judean maidens!
Now that the rosetrees and the garden's flowers
with rich perfume are laden,
keep to your distant bowers
and do not tread these thresholds that are ours.

My dear one, hide, take shelter,
turn your face to the hills that stand in rows,
and speak not; see the welter
of maids about her where she goes,
wandering the strange islands no one knows.

Birds who fly hither lightly,
you lions, fawns, and leaping fallow deer,
woods, vales, and rivers sprightly,
winds, waters, heats that sear,
and terrors that surround the night with fear:

By lyres and their soft sighing
I do beseech you, by the sirens' song:
silence your angry crying,
halt where the walls rise strong,
to keep the sleeping bride secure from wrong.

The bride has come to rest in
the pleasant garden's most alluring space,
and at her ease to nest in
her quiet leaning place,
within the sweetness of the groom's embrace.

Under the apple boughs,
there did I take you when our troth was plighted,
there gave my hand and vows,
and there you were requited,
where once your mother was abased and slighted.

Our marriage-couch, made festive
with flowers, with lion's grottoes posted round,
all purple-hung, suggestive
of peace within it bound,
and with a thousand golden emblems crowned.

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There where your steps precede them,
the maidens follow in an eager line
where torches lead them,
and the spiced wine,
and the balsamic scent of the divine.

In my Beloved's cellar
I drank, and after tasting from his store,
wandered those fields, a dweller
in bliss, and cared no more
for the lost flocks that were my care before.

There at his breast he fed me,
there taught me knowledge sweet, with pleasure rife;
there where he led me
I gave myself for life
entirely, and pledged to be his wife.

My soul, in his employment,
spends all its wealth, forsakes its own affairs;
no flocks provide enjoyment,
no task, but that which bears
on love alone, and on no other cares.

If, where the flocks are feeding,
from this day forth I am no longer found,
say Love is leading
me a dizzy round,
and I have let myself be lost—and bound.

We shall weave emeralds, flowers
picked when the earliest rays of morning shine,
garlands grown by the powers
of your own love, to twine
about a single strand, a hair of mine.

One hair you chanced to note,
about my neck, that did your glance awaken.
You glimpsed it at my throat,
were snared and shaken,
and wounded by my eye and wholly taken.

Whenever you beheld me,
your eyes imprinted all their graces there,
mastered and quelled me;
and my eyes earned their share:
to worship all in you that sight laid bare.

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Do not, I beg, despise
the swarthy skin in which your sight first knew me;
look on me now: your eyes
have scattered through me
the beauty of the gaze with which you drew me.

That snowy little dove
bearing the branch back to the ark is flying—
the turtle, high above—
happily spying
on the green banks the Love for which she's sighing.

She once lived lonely,
and now, alone, has settled in her nest,
guided alone and only
by One she loves the best,
who, wounded for love's sake, has come to rest.

Let us find joy together,
Beloved, in your beauty find our looks
reflected, whether
on hills or in pure brooks;
let us go deep into those wooded nooks.

Then to high, hidden
crevices in stony desert waste—
caves none can find unbidden—
we'll go, untraced,
where pomegranate wine is ours to taste.

You would delight me, showing
me, there, those things my spirit yearns to know,
and later by bestowing,
O Love I treasure so!
what first you gave to me some days ago.

Air, in its even breathing;
the song sweet Philomel sings in her flight;
the grove, its peace bequeathing
to gentle night,
with flames consuming all in painless light.

And none to apprehend it;
Aminadab quite gone, without a trace;
the siege quietly ended,
horsemen halting their race,
dismounting near the waters of that place.

St. John of the Cross (1542-1591)
translated from the Spanish by Rhina P. Espaillat

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Books in Review

The Risen Christ

The Resurrection of the Son of God. By N. T. Wright. *Fortress. 740 pp. $39 paper.*

Reviewed by Gary A. Anderson

The past decade or so has produced numerous challenges to reading the Bible as a trustworthy historical witness. Scholars in the field of Old Testament studies question every detail of the pre-exilic corpus. As for the New Testament, there is the infamous Jesus Seminar and the seemingly annual appearance of its heretical claims festooned on the cover of a prominent national periodical.

For many orthodox believers, these problems are rooted in the historical-critical enterprise itself. Yet one should recall that the move to read the Bible historically took root in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries primarily among devout Christian thinkers. Rather than attempting to harmonize the differences between conflicting biblical accounts, these interpreters tried to let each voice speak reverently on its own.

What has emerged as radically different in the recent past is that appropriate historical questions have left the domain of theological faculties and entered the world of an increasingly post- and often anti-Christian culture. In the wake of this trend, proposals about the nature of the early Christian movement have begun to emerge that contradict completely even the most generously liberal interpretations of Jesus' identity. John Dominic Crossan, for instance, has suggested that Jesus was an itinerant peasant-sage who died a tragic death in Jerusalem. His body, abandoned on the Cross by his dearest friends, was dragged away by dogs and left to rot. The resurrection narratives are a relatively late attempt to put a good spin on a sad tale. Even worse, Crossan argues that they were constructed in order to buttress competing claims to authority in the nascent Church.

Secular and politicizing perspectives like these have not sprung forth fully formed from the pens of recent writers. Their way has been paved by a tendency among modern scholars to view the resurrection from a purely naturalistic standpoint. N. T. Wright helpfully summarizes this approach at the very beginning of his book *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. In his view it is made up of several interlocking parts: the Jewish background provides only the fuzziest setting for constructing a doctrine of the resurrection; the earliest Christian movement, whose outlook is captured in Paul's vision of the risen Lord, believed in a spiritual resurrection; hence the early "sightings" of Jesus were nothing more than highly vivid religious experiences, not genuine witnesses to a person raised from the dead; these spiritual experiences are best characterized as a form of heavenly exaltation; lastly, the Gospel narratives about a bodily resurrection arrive relatively late in the game—a decade or two after the appearance of the earliest Pauline letters—and were written to explain this transformation from "glorification" to "the raising of Jesus from the dead."

The task of this formidably long volume (which runs to almost 750 pages) is to examine critically each of these claims and then, on purely historical grounds, to defend the veracity of the New Testament account against them. Wright thus concludes that Jesus was indeed resurrected from the dead and for a limited period of time appeared in bodily form to his disciples.

Establishing this orthodox interpretation is no easy task for Wright. Nor is it for his readers. Beginning with a lengthy consideration of the pagan and Jewish evidence, he considers *every* New Testament witness to the problem. In his last two chapters he gets to the heart of the matter—the argument for the resurrection itself and its implications for Jesus' divine identity.

Wright's bold argument is extensive and detailed, but it can be summarized in simple form. While Second Temple Judaism supplied the concept of resurrection to Jesus' followers, it did not do so in the specific manner in which it was deployed in early Christianity. In other words, the Christian position, while grounded in Jewish tradition, did not spring spontaneously from it. Furthermore, while neither the empty tomb nor the appearance of Jesus could have generated belief in the resurrection on its own, taken together these accounts demand an explanation. And in Wright's view the simplest explanation is what the New Testament writers profess: Jesus rose from the dead on the third day.

The argument that the stories about the empty tomb and the subsequent appearances should be considered historical "facts" (but not yet given their Christian interpretation—the bodily resurrection of Jesus) is grounded for Wright in the principle of double similarity and dissimilarity. By these terms, Wright

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means that stories like these, with the kind of explanation the early Christians offered, make sense in the context of first-century Judaism (similarity), but nobody within first-century Judaism was expecting anything precisely like this (dissimilarity). At the same time, stories like these do indeed explain the rise of early Christianity (similarity) but they cannot be explained as something projected backward by early Christian faith, theology, and exegesis (dissimilarity).

One example should suffice. Because the Gospels establish the claims of the evolving Church that Jesus has risen, one might dismiss them as pious legends. Yet there are a sufficient number of narrative elements that are so problematic that it would be difficult to explain them as post hoc constructions.

To begin with, one of the most common elements in early Christian preaching is the great effort to show that the crucified Jesus was Israel's messiah as testified to by her scriptures. Peter's sermon on the first Pentecost (Acts 2) is a good example of this. Yet despite this strong ecclesial interest, the telling of the resurrection in all four Gospels remains "biblically unadorned and thus distinctly different from a good many of the other stories throughout the Gospels, not least the crucifixion narratives which immediately precede them."

Second, a major feature of the ecclesial use of the resurrection is to establish the claim that Christians will also rise with Christ at his *parousia*. The point for early Christian preaching was clear: the power of the doctrine of the resurrection was the ground it laid for one's personal hope of personal immortality. Yet the Gospels "are about something else altogether: the vindication of Jesus [and] the validation of his messianic claim."

Third, Jesus is not portrayed in his appearances in a way that would comport with Jewish expectation. For example, the radiant character of the resurrection body so vividly described in Daniel 12:2-3 is not part of the Gospel narrative. If the appearance stories were fictionalized back-projections based on Jewish expectations, why was the picture of Daniel ignored? Finally, the presence of the women at the tomb on Easter is totally inexplicable. As the debate between Origen and Celsus in the third century reveals, the critics of Christianity "seized upon these stories in order to scoff at the whole tale; were the legend-writers really so ignorant of the likely reaction? If they could have invented stories of fine, upstanding, reliable male witnesses being first at the tomb, they would have done it."

WHAT ARE WE to make of this? One option is to presume that the Gospel writers have inherited a theology of the resurrected body that they have read back into the life of Jesus. Yet the purveyors of such a thesis—the majority of critical scholars—must account for why this piece of fiction is so different from available Jewish templates; why it avoids citation or allusion to Israel's scriptures; and why it puts a group of women in a position of such prominence in place of the disciples-turned-church-leaders. As Wright puts it, "If you try to imagine three such people doing it independently and coming up with three different stories which nevertheless all share the[se] remarkable feature[s], I think you will find it incredible."

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Wright closes his book with the posing of a question that rests at the heart of the entire Christian enterprise. If we can accept as historical fact that the tomb was empty and that the disciples claimed to have seen their Lord on Easter day and for some time afterwards, how do we understand the relationship between the two? The doctrine of the bodily resurrection of Jesus would provide a *sufficient* condition to explain their coherence. But Wright is bolder: "The bodily resurrection of Jesus provides a *necessary* condition for these things." In other words: no other explanation will do.

Wright's argument is certainly not going to convince many biblical scholars. This is so, at least in part, for a reason Wright himself gives: such a proof of the resurrection cannot be offered or accepted on purely neutral terms. To say that Jesus of Nazareth was bodily raised from the dead "is not only a self-*involving* statement, it is a self-*committing* statement." Yet Wright has honestly placed the historical problem front and center: if one accepts as a historical fact that the tomb was empty and that early Christians claimed to have seen Jesus in a new form, then some sort of explanation must be made to make sense of these two pieces of data.

I believe that Wright has shown with utmost clarity that the doctrine of the resurrection was deeply embedded in the fabric of the early Christian movement. The tendency among certain scholars to claim that a wide swath of early Christianity, represented by the circle of "Q" (a presumed common source of the synoptic Gospels) and the Gospel of Thomas, advanced a view of Jesus bereft of crucifixion and resurrection is just not tenable. Whatever one makes of "Q," it should be clear by the close of this volume that the thought-world of the Gospel of Thomas is a late development and best understood against the backdrop of second-century Gnosticism. Indeed, most serious scholars of Gnostic sources have been saying this for some time. The explanation for why the books of Crossan and Elaine Pagels have such currency lies within the realm of the sociology of knowledge, not the history of early Christianity. That story has yet to be told.

More troubling for me is just what the theological gain will be from the project Wright has set out for himself. An objective, hard-hitting critique of the Jesus Seminar on purely historical grounds is certainly welcome. An objective historian can find reasons to affirm the resurrection stories. But the theological task of accounting for the identity of Jesus Christ must rest on something larger than just an historical affirmation of the resurrection. Can the larger question of identity move forward along the purely historical path that Wright proposes? The criticisms that Hans Frei made of historical approaches such as this one in his *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* (1974) are hard to answer.

In Wright's view the only path forward is the establishment of a sequence of events in the life of Jesus that stand up to the scrutiny of historians. This historically reconstructed sequence of events will not conform fully to the telling of the story that the Gospel writers themselves have offered the Church. The Gospel writers wrote in the context of the evolving Church and sometimes skewed their portraits to match ecclesial interest rather than historical reality. In this particular volume these worries are not so weighty, since all Wright sets out to determine is whether the resurrection as an event is true or not. But when the same set of methods is turned on the full Gospel narrative, the reader has to accept a whole set of historical judgments that Wright makes in order to proceed to the plane of theological reflection and

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affirmation. Having read a good deal of Wright, I, for one, am not prepared to follow all of his historical reconstructions. No doubt they are learned; but as examples of historical imagination they remain speculative and somewhat idiosyncratic.

But this criticism of Wright's larger project should not be understood as detracting from the lucid historical reasoning of the present volume. As François Bovon remarked while reviewing the work of Crossan: "The earliest known Christian sentence is not a saying of Jesus but an archaic affirmation quoted by Paul in the oldest text of the New Testament: 'God raised him from the dead' (1 Thessalonians 1:10; see also 4:14)." Wright's book is an attempt to return this ancient claim of the nascent Christian movement to its proper place of honor.

Religion and Science Revisited

MODERN PHYSICS AND ANCIENT FAITH. By STEPHEN M. BARR. *University of Notre Dame Press. 312 pp. $30.*

Reviewed by Robin Collins

BOOKS about the relation between science and religion abound. Some, usually penned by scientistic atheists of one stripe or another, insist that the two fields are mutually antagonistic and thus that readers must choose between a life of reasonable sobriety and one of blindly irrational faith. Other books, more often than not written by religious believers, emphasize continuities between the pursuit of theological and scientific truth. Although many are not without merit, they all too often skirt the difficult questions that confront anyone who wishes to harmonize biblical religion with the findings of what appears to be the thoroughgoing materialism of modern physics.

Stephen Barr, a particle physicist at the Bartol Research Institute at the University of Delaware and a frequent contributor to these pages, has written a book that takes the efforts of the latter camp to a much higher level. Indeed, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith* ranks among the most

ROBIN COLLINS *is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Messiah College. He has done extensive research on the relation between physics and religion and is currently completing a book tentatively titled* The Well-Tempered Universe: God, Fine-Tuning, and the Laws of Nature.

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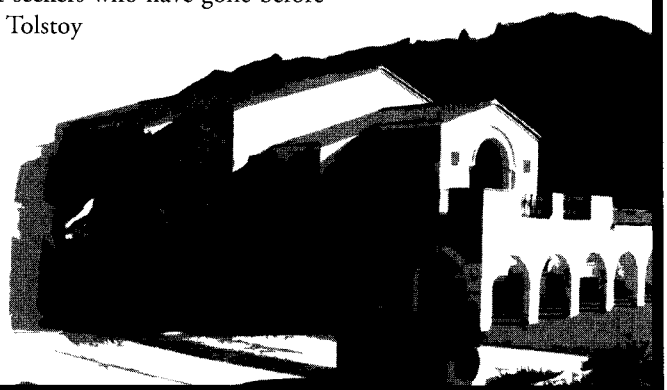

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scientifically, theologically, and philosophically rigorous studies of the relation between science and theology to appear in recent years. That it is also written in a clear and highly accessible style makes it even more worthy of widespread notice, discussion, and debate.

Barr begins his book by pointing out that the methods and discoveries of modern physics can and must be separated from the philosophical doctrine of materialism, which so often serves as a dogmatic and, as Barr goes on to show with great power and effectiveness, unsubstantiated faith among physicists. According to Barr, it was never obvious that physics implied or presupposed a materialistic view of the universe, but the existence of such a connection has been rendered downright implausible by a series of developments in twentieth-century physics. In a series of lucid chapters, Barr addresses the question of whether the universe had a beginning, looks at the issue of whether the universe exhibits any evidence of design or purpose, and examines what contemporary physics (and mathematics) has to say about the nature of human beings—specifically on the question of whether our behavior is determined by physical laws and whether we have an immaterial nature. At each point, Barr shows that "recent discoveries have begun to confound the materialist's expectations and confirm those of the believer in God."

Understanding Barr's main contention is key to judging the cogency of his arguments. If the reader approaches Barr's book in the hopes that it will provide a scientifically defensible proof of the central claims of biblical religion—such as, at a minimum, that God exists—he will be disappointed. As Barr repeats at several points throughout the book, he seeks merely to demonstrate that numerous discoveries in science confirm the expectations of the believer more than they do those of the materialist. For instance, Barr prefaces his discussion of so-called anthropic coincidences—that is, the fact that many of the laws that govern the universe seem to be fine-tuned for life to exist and thrive—by noting that this evidence has not "succeeded in ending the old debate between religion and materialism." Nonetheless, he also notes that it has "dramatically changed the terms of the debate. It is no longer a question of whether one can find any evidence in nature that we were built in. Such evidence abounds. It is now a question of whether that evidence should be taken at face value, whether it really means what it seems to mean." Throughout the book, Barr seeks above all to counter one of the main arguments materialists have offered for their position—namely, that science confirms a materialist worldview rather than a religious one.

MANY OF BARR'S analyses are incisive and exceptionally well-argued. He also displays a sophisticated understanding of Christian theology, especially in the Roman Catholic tradition, often citing such historically important theologians/philosophers as St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas in support of his arguments. In his chapter on cosmology, for example, Barr is careful to point out that the claim that God created the universe simply means that the universe depends for its existence on God's free will; as Aquinas pointed out, this could be the case even if the universe always existed. Nonetheless, Barr argues that because big bang cosmology—including recent variants such as inflationary cosmology—hypothesizes a beginning, it fits better with the expectations of traditional theism than with atheism, which has historically posited an eternal universe. Although we cannot be sure that future cosmological discoveries will not overturn this conclusion, Barr claims that "the trend is clear: everything we have ever studied has proven to have a beginning."

Barr is at his best in confronting the arguments—and, just as often, the rhetoric—of materialism. As he

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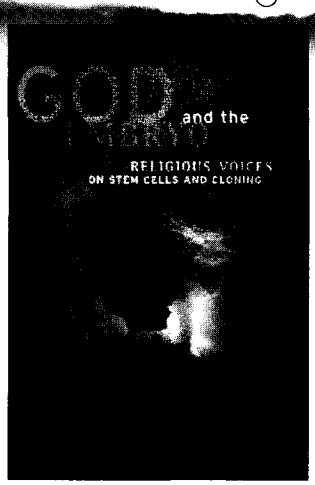

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points out, since theists believe that the world was created by a supremely intelligent being, we would expect it to be at least partially intelligible by human reason, which traditional Christian theology has held to be a uniquely human gift of God. Such intelligibility is a puzzle for materialists, however. As Albert Einstein famously remarked, "The most unintelligible thing about the universe is that it is intelligible at all."

Barr also correctly points out the circularity of some of the most common arguments in favor of materialism. Materialists, for instance, claim that to deny that everything in the natural world can be reduced to physics or mathematics is nothing more than "mystery-mongering" and thus a rejection of rational explanation. As Barr notes, however, this assumes, without rational justification, that all rational explanation must be rendered in terms of equations and quantities, an assumption that theists reject.

Then there is Barr's powerful argument against materialism as such: "If ideas are just patterns of nerve impulses, then how can one say that any idea (including the idea of materialism itself) is superior to any other? One pattern of nerve impulses cannot be truer or less true than another pattern, any more than a toothache can be truer or less true than another toothache." In other words, human judgment and evaluation, which are necessary to determine truth and error (including the truth or error of materialism), presuppose a world of moral meaning that transcends the merely material. The very effort to demonstrate the truth of materialism thus refutes materialism.

If the book's greatest strength lies in its analysis of materialism and its discussion of the findings of modern science, its greatest weakness or limitation can be found in some of its detailed philosophical arguments. Take, for example, Barr's discussion of the order that seems to prevail in the universe. Barr claims that modern physics has discovered a universe with an extremely high degree of order and "harmony." Indeed, the trend is for physics to seek ever greater order to explain ever more detailed aspects of natural phenomena. So far, so good. However, Barr then raises the question of whether the very existence of this orderliness can be explained in scientific terms; in particular, he examines whether chance or natural selection can

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explain it. In the end, he concludes that they cannot, and, in turn, that this failure points to the need for a transcendent ground to explain the order.

Yet surely the argument requires significantly greater development than this. Why couldn't an atheist, for example, simply contend that the order of nature is a brute fact? One possible answer, which Barr acknowledges in passing, is that the very contingency of the laws of nature cries out for scientific explanation, even though such an explanation would by definition have to transcend the natural, contingent world to appeal to God, understood as a (indeed, the only) necessary being. The problem with this argument, however, is that it simply reduces to the old "cosmological" argument for the existence of God, according to which the universe, unlike God, is contingent and hence in need of an external explanation for its existence. In and of itself, the existence of an orderly universe does not provide an independent argument for God's existence.

To develop this argument adequately, one would need to focus on the beauty and elegance of the laws of nature, which even a hardened atheist such as Nobel prize–winning physicist Stephen Weinberg both acknowledges and emphasizes in his book *Dreams of a Final Theory* (1994). Given that God is the greatest possible being—and hence a being with a perfect aesthetic sense—we would expect the universe to exemplify beauty and elegance at the fundamental level, but we would not expect this under atheism. Although Barr gestures toward this sort of argument, he never really develops it.

ANOTHER AREA where Barr's argument could use some elaboration is in his discussion of the implications of quantum mechanics. Here Barr enters some of the deepest and most treacherous waters in the book. Following a classic line of argument presented by several well-known and respected physicists, Barr argues that as presently formulated, quantum theory implies that the mind of the scientist who studies the material world at the quantum level must be assumed to transcend that world. This view is based on the claim that quantum mechanics only describes a hypothetical reality and hence requires an observer—the scientist—to create the determinate reality of fact that the scientist uncovers when performing an experiment. In some sense, then, at the quantum level of nature the scientist imposes or determines the very orderliness he seeks to discover. But this understanding of the scientist's activity generates a paradox, for if the mind of the scientist is entirely a physical object in the natural world, then it would be as dependent on the determining activity of an observer as any other natural object. The conditions for an infinite regress of objects and observers thus seems to have been established. In order to resolve this paradox, some physicists have posited that the mind of the physicist must somehow exist (at least partially) outside of the world the scientist seeks to understand.

The problem with this view is that it suffers from its own implausibilities. Since macroscopic objects are composed of the microscopic objects described by quantum mechanics, it seems to follow that quantum indefiniteness should be reflected in macroscopic objects such as refrigerators, cars, and mountains. But surely it is untrue that such objects are dependent on observers for their determinacy in the way that quantum particles are. (Does anyone believe that his refrigerator's location in space-time depends on him entering the kitchen?) Moreover, even if we disregard this problem, we're still left with the question of exactly how observers of quantum reality make that reality determinate; from what Barr tells us, we might conclude that they do so by some mysterious power. It is just these sorts of objections that have led most physicists and philosophers to advocate alternative interpretations (each of which, it must be admitted, has its own distinct difficulties).

Still, these relatively minor shortcomings aside, Barr has written an accessible, insightful, and fair overview of how the discoveries of physics and mathematics during the last century could be thought to confirm the expectations of the religious believer—as well as a careful analysis and critique of materialism. For those looking for an overview that will help them to think at a deep level about these issues, I cannot think of anything better than *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith*.

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The Making of a Killer

HARVARD AND THE UNABOMBER: THE EDUCATION OF AN AMERICAN TERRORIST. By ALSTON CHASE. *W. W. Norton. 432 pp. $26.95.*

Reviewed by Paul McHugh

BEGINNING IN 1978 and continuing until he was apprehended in 1996, Theodore Kaczynski manufactured and mailed sixteen bombs to prominent Americans working in biological and computer science and environment technology. Dubbed the "Unabomber" by the FBI, he killed three people and cruelly maimed eleven others in these attacks. When captured, he had a seventeenth lethal bomb on the shelf requiring only stamps and an address to wend its way to another victim.

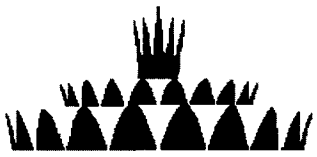
PAUL R. MCHUGH *is former Psychiatrist-in-Chief at Johns Hopkins Hospital.*

In *Harvard and the Unabomber: The Education of an American Terrorist*, Alston Chase, a philosopher and student of intellectual history, describes Kaczynski's acts, the sufferings he inflicted on the unsuspecting, and how his estranged brother eventually unmasked him once he recognized Theodore's style of thought in the 35,000-word document or "manifesto" he blackmailed the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* into publishing. But Chase is not aiming merely to provide a biography of a serial killer. Rather, he wants to describe cultural forces at play in America after World War II—forces that may have provided the energy and motivations for this celebrated terrorist. This latter intention is what makes the book unique and its conclusions worthy of careful examination.

Of special interest is Chase's opinion about the claim, made in Kaczynski's legal defense, that he suffered from some variant of paranoid schizophrenia. After examining Kaczynski's writings and many public statements, Chase concludes (and I agree) that Kaczynski was and is sane. Although Kaczynski tends to expand verbosely on his opinions, his thoughts always remain coherent and directed by a conscious design. He justifies his objectionable behavior not with weird or eccentric delusions but with beliefs about the corruptions of technology, the fragmentation of society, and the growing commercial injury to our planet's environment that plenty of Americans share. Indeed, Chase refers to the ideas in Kaczynski's "manifesto" as clichés and thus far from delusional.

Schizophrenics express their thoughts in incoherent ways and harbor beliefs unshared by others, usually encompassing a suspicion that they are targets of attention. Kaczynski did not believe that those who were spoiling the world noticed or were in any way interested in him. He believed they were injuring the earth and the culture for all of us and that he—and he hoped others eventually—should find a way to fight back. The assassin attacking from the shadows is not a delusional thinker but a gutless scoundrel.

MUCH OF CHASE'S BOOK is devoted to explaining how Kaczynski became that scoundrel. Kaczynski grew up in a working-class community in Chicago. Aware of their son's intellectual gifts, Kaczynski's parents pushed him to achieve. He moved quickly, skipping a grade in grammar school and entering Harvard College to study mathematics in the late 1950s when he was sixteen. He was thought socially withdrawn and somewhat arrogant by his peers but did well at Harvard and even better— with prizes to prove it—during graduate study at the University of



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Michigan. He then spent a couple of years on the mathematics faculty at the University of California at Berkeley in the late 1960s—right when that school was disrupted by draft riots and other violent protests against American life. From Berkeley though, Kaczynski went off the rails, leaving mathematics and academic life to find a plot of land in rural Montana where alone, in a small cabin, he began building bombs and killing people.

Chase constructs an explanatory thesis from these facts. He thinks Kaczynski's parents pushed him "relentlessly" for conflicting academic and social goals. And Chase describes what Kaczynski took from the Berkeley scene and its radicals. But he neither lingers on popular psychological themes nor expands on the antiestablishment violence of the Berkeley campus to explain Kaczynski's terrorist behavior. He has a more original explanation to propose.

According to Chase, Kaczynski was set on his destructive path by a "culture of despair" ubiquitous at Harvard College in the 1950s. The General Education courses that all Harvard undergraduates were required to sample for their bachelor's degree were permeated by this culture. Chase believes that in these courses Kaczynski was exposed to books and teachers who portrayed all traditional moral values as meaningless or at least "irrational." These courses also taught that advances in science and technology had brought forth the power to debase rather than advance our civilization. Nietzsche, the Dostoevski of *Notes from the Underground*, and the Freud of *The Future of an Illusion*—all of which dismissed the belief that human life has a purpose—these were standard fare in Kaczynski's courses and the bread and butter of college discussion groups, or so Chase maintains. All of them had supposedly devastating effects on Kaczynski's conception of the world and eventually emerged as arguments in his "manifesto."

Compounding this intellectual misdirection was what Chase describes as a traumatic assault at Harvard on Kaczynski's mental integrity carried out in the name of psychological research by one of the college's eccentric professors, Henry Murray—he of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). Murray recruited volunteers from among the gifted Harvard undergraduates for personality assessment (without completely informing them what they would face). Murray intended to challenge their personal ideas so as to see how they stood up to "stress." For this purpose the victims' worldviews (whatever they might be) were confronted and their presentations of themselves scornfully attacked during an hour-long session by interviewers skilled in disputation. Harvard undergraduates, presumably being more than usually sensitive about their intellectual prowess, lost, at least momentarily, some of their "self-esteem," and Murray studied how they responded and recovered.

Most did find the experience transiently disturbing (although not all—some were amused). But, Chase holds, this deflationary and challenging experience alienated Kaczynski by disclosing just what psychologists were willing to do to people. This experience more than any other, Chase repeatedly claims, prompted Kaczynski to seek "revenge."

Chase seizes upon this event because he is arguing against the commonly held opinion that the culture of the 1960s was responsible for the Unabomber. He wants to claim that ideas and practices from the

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fifties—particularly at Harvard—were to blame. Yet Chase can't help pointing out other causes as well, such as worries about America's guilt in the Cold War, Vietnam, and the poisoning of the ecology. But as these more general causes are added to the list, Chase's thesis dissolves into a mixture of psychobabble and left-leaning political commentary about how Kaczynski could have felt, should have felt, and must have felt.

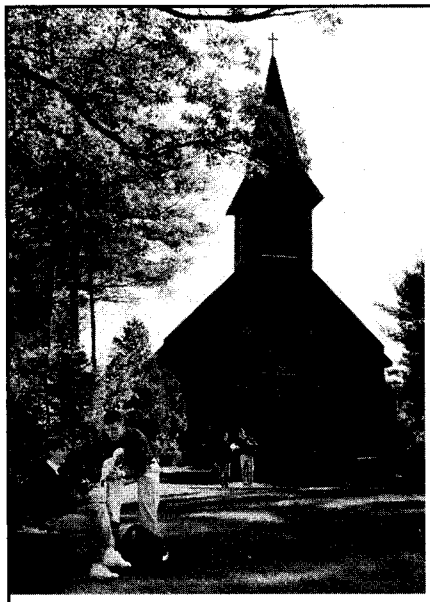
The only direct evidence of how the young student at Harvard *did* feel was an essay written in his sophomore year, just before the Murray experiment. It concludes with this summary. "The most important parts of my philosophy [are]: The desirability of competition and struggle. There is no morality or objective set of values. The importance of independence." This reads more like Ayn Rand than Harvard General Education. And again, one is left to wonder how this stance provides a foundation for terrorism.

Many of Chase's facts founder on similar inspection. The Harvard General Education syllabus from which students selected courses was much more diversified than Chase claims. Chase does not identify the courses Kaczynski took but rather describes his own General Education courses, presuming that the nihilism he found was standard in the syllabus. But the General Education courses that I took in the 1950s—taught by such noted teachers as John Finley and Samuel Beer—instilled in students a confidence in Western Civilization.

But more to the point, while Chase works hard to explain Kaczynski's ideas, he neglects to explain Kaczynski's violence except for vague references to his "need for revenge." But the Unabomber's ideas and their sources, given their prevalence, don't need all that much explanation. It is Kaczynski's brutal assaults that are singular, and for their villainy Chase offers no coherent explanation.

Herein lies the biggest problem with the book. It displays a lack of indignation toward Kaczynski and an excess of indignation towards Harvard and the 1950s. The emphasis on commonplace arguments urged by college sophomores on each other totally overlooks the viciousness of the behavior. Surely Harvard College, its General Educational programs, and a stressful but fundamentally silly pseudo-experiment cannot bear the moral responsibility for Kaczynski's terrible actions.

Chase passes by Kaczynski's treachery and so avoids the burden of explaining it. Rather than an intellec-



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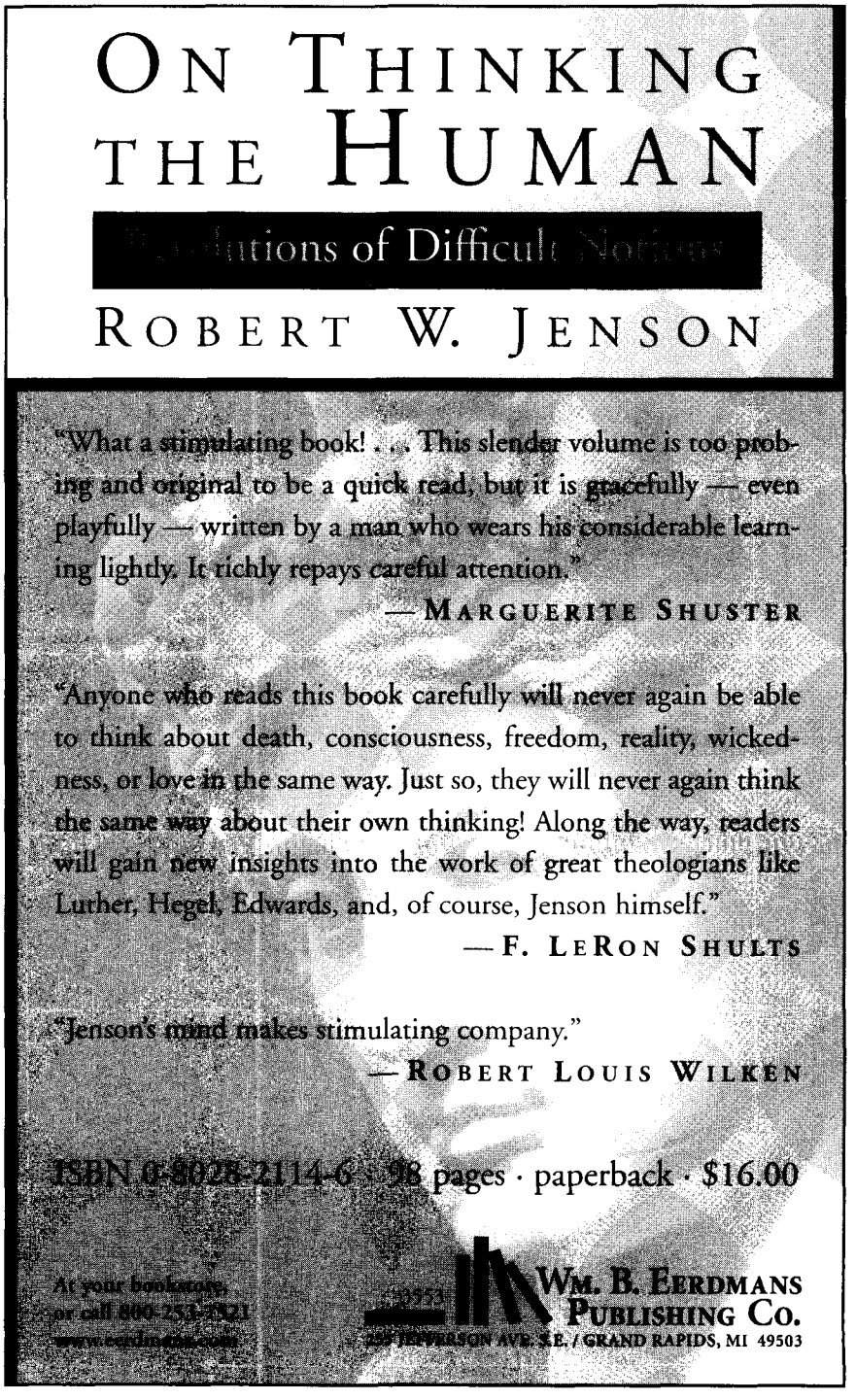
tual thug depriving people of hopes and plans, families and friends, Chase describes a misguided sophomore whose parents pushed him too hard to succeed.

The ideas that Chase identifies as significant to Kaczynski—such as the view that matters of morals are "emotive" rather than "rational"—will not in themselves deprive their holder of emotions and hence of empathic appreciation for the suffering of others. Something more is needed to explain the absence of the capacity to participate in another's feelings of anguish and dismay.

Here we face a common enough problem in the study of disordered behavior. If a person has no obvious mental illness—that is, no illness recognizable from identifiable symptoms and signs distinct from the behavior one is seeking to explain—then a much more elaborate study of the life, especially the interior life, of the perpetrator is required than the one Chase provides or can provide from the published record.

Given what we do know, a simple explanatory hypothesis for Kaczynski's behavior would be the following. As an intellectually gifted but rather socially inept person, he learned from the nihilists and picked up some of the antitechnology culture in college. At the same time he ignored, probably from arrogance, much that helped other students keep their sense of proportion, even when mistreated by some of the more foolish Harvard faculty members (of which there are always some). Later, when he faced obstacles and resistances in such matters as his sexual life and professional attention, he indulged in ruminations on the past, baseless recriminations, and vicious daydreams, all in an isolated cabin removed from corrective interactions with other people. As we know from the coded journal found in his cabin, Kaczynski's reflections and reckonings led, inexorably, to the corruption of his character.

In "The Stare's Nest by My Window," W. B. Yeats described this human potential for self-corruption more clearly than anyone: "We had fed the heart on fantasies, the heart's grown brutal from the fare; More substance in our enmities than in our love." Once one recognizes that the villainy of Kaczynski's behavior, and not the ideas in his "manifesto," is what needs to be explained, the belief that a pathological antitechnology culture at Harvard in the 1950s turned an upstanding, bright, socially vulnerable student into a vicious killer is simply absurd.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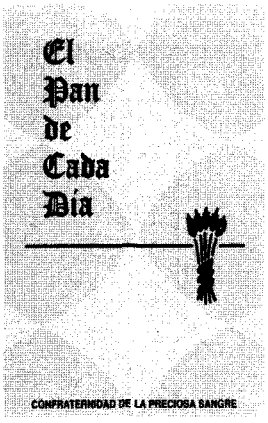

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Too Much Democracy?

The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad. By Fareed Zakaria. *W. W. Norton. 286 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by William Ruger

Since ancient times, political thinkers have been concerned with the promise and pathologies of democracy. For Aristotle, rule of the many could be just, but only if it was tempered by the ambition and virtue of the few. More recently, the American Founders lauded the virtues of self-government while realizing the need for a constitutional system to constrain the unmediated will of the people. Today, commentators from both the left and right are far more sanguine about unalloyed democracy. Indeed, few stop to seriously examine the relative strengths and weaknesses of democratic government. Fareed Zakaria's *The Future of Freedom* is a bold statement of dissent from this nearly universal democratic faith in the name of republican or "mixed" government.

Zakaria's provocative argument is that the rise of ever more democratic means of governance in the public and private spheres has been detrimental to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness across the globe. Rather than seeing democratization as a universal panacea that can be prescribed safely without limit, he believes that we suffer today from "too much democracy." The result has been the rise of "illiberal democracies" abroad, greater dissatisfaction with our own political system, and the overall degeneration of American society.

Of course, Zakaria is no simple opponent of democracy. He explicitly states that his work "is not an argument against democracy" but a challenge to examine its "dark sides." Moreover, it is "a call for self-control, for a restoration of the balance between democracy and liberty." In terms of the practice of politics, Zakaria implies that he is seeking a renewal of the republican tradition in which the people rule indirectly by delegating power to a representative government that remains insulated from the majority and thus free to govern wisely with an eye on the national interest.

Zakaria launches his case with a return to the past. He argues that the

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"Paul Zahl continues to be one of our most productive, provocative, and prolific theological thinkers. He writes in the best tradition of the learned ministry, and he is at his trenchant best in this, his latest book."
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success of the West came not through rapid democratization but through the slow growth of constitutionalism, capitalism, and segments of society relatively independent of the state. These factors, he claims, laid a strong and necessary foundation for the eventual rise of liberal democracy. Moreover, he warns that democracies without such a foundation have traditionally degenerated into illiberal regimes.

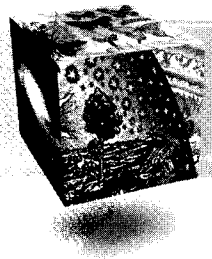
Having explained the right and wrong paths to a flourishing liberal democracy, Zakaria introduces the reader to modern "illiberal democracies"—namely, states that "mix elections and authoritarianism." He then explains why democratic processes in the absence of liberal constitutionalism and capitalism produce such states and catalogs their many troubles. Of course, this might just be a bump on the road except that, as Zakaria points out, "illiberal democracy has not proved to be an effective path to liberal democracy." In short, quick democratization—the path to illiberal democracy—is the wrong way to pursue political development.

This leads Zakaria to examine the Middle East, where, he claims, the West should "not seek democracy . . . at least not yet." Instead, the long-term solution is for the region's Arab regimes to slowly liberalize, and only then to democratize. However, he does not mean "democratization" in the sense used by State Department officials. His vision is a more conservative process of political opening accompanied by the development of capitalism and the "revival of constitutionalism." It is hard to have much confidence that such counsel will be followed in Washington, given what Zakaria claims about the United States.

For Zakaria, the global problem of our "democratic age" has not left the United States untouched. Indeed, he argues at length that many of America's current ills—from the decline in public attitudes towards government to the degeneration of American culture to corporate scandals—have been the result of the increased democratization of all facets of life. In short, we are increasingly ruled by the many, and the results are not good. Instead of greater legitimacy and more effective government, democratization has left us with "more democracy but less liberty" and the "death of authority" such that the United States is becoming increasingly dysfunctional.

Zakaria's remedy for these supposedly self-inflicted wounds is a turn (or a return in our case) to a more republican form of governance: "What we need in politics today is not more democracy but less." Specifically, his solution is delegation. Building on examples of central banks and the World Trade Organization, Zakaria advocates the delegation of significant authority to political actors so as to insulate them from "the intense pressures of democracy." This, he argues, would lead to better governance and increased legitimacy. In short, Zakaria's message seems to be that governments will operate better if we take the political out of politics.

The Future of Freedom is an important book. Zakaria takes liberty seriously and privileges it over competing values, which is certainly a worthy exercise. Several positive consequences follow from the effort, two of which are worthy of mention. First, Zakaria wisely corrects the false but widely held notion that the expansion of democracy always ensures more just outcomes. For readers of Zakaria's mentor, Samuel Huntington, this will hardly come as a surprise. But for others, it will serve as a helpful reminder of old truths. Second, Zakaria's book provides useful cau-



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tions for those who would have the United States actively spread democracy abroad—particularly by the sword. Zakaria suggests that the simple imposition of democratic processes alone is insufficient for producing the liberal results that are ostensibly among the goals of such interventions. And even where those goods are attained, it is likely to take considerable time, perhaps decades, to reach them.

Unfortunately, not all of Zakaria's points are as useful or compelling as these. One problem is his seemingly simple faith in the rule of elites. Of course, Zakaria is too smart not to offer the Acton-esque caveats about how power can corrupt and lead to the pursuit of "well-intentioned but foolish policies." However, the warning sounds perfunctory amidst so much praise for elite rule. Given Zakaria's professed attachment to republican principles, this position is quite odd, especially since such republicans as the American Founders understood very well that political institutions consist of imperfect men who are often more motivated by self-interest than the common good (or who self-servingly conflate the two).

Moreover, students of such "unbiased" elite bodies as the Supreme Court and Progressive-era regulatory agencies such as the Interstate Commerce Commission have their own reasons to look with skepticism on calls for greater reliance on political bodies that claim to be above politics. In the end, Zakaria trusts too much in the rule of the few. At the very least, it would have been instructive for him to expand on the inherent problems of delegating political authority and suggest ways—new or old—to mitigate them.

Another significant problem is Zakaria's excessive emphasis on institutional structure in government. Clearly, no one should deny that institutions matter. Yet Zakaria rarely goes beyond institutions when crafting his criticisms. This is especially apparent in his concluding chapter, which is meant to serve as a guide to lead us out of our current woes. All of the institutional tinkering in the world will not solve our problems if it is not accompanied by an equally profound reformation in the surrounding culture of the country. Yet regrettably, Zakaria's institutionalism blinds him to the crucial role of culture, not to mention ideas and education, in fostering the very outlook and behavior he believes are necessary for a nation of free individuals and institutions to perpetuate itself. Those truly concerned about the future of freedom in America cannot afford to make a similar mistake.

Briefly Noted

Sidewalks in the Kingdom: New Urbanism and the Christian Faith. By Eric O. Jacobsen. *Brazos. 192 pp. $16.99 paper.*

This readable, albeit modest, volume gives the average Christian reader a window into the problems associated with contemporary urban (and suburban) life and meditates upon the ways they may be ameliorated. Jacobsen, an associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Missoula, Montana, challenges Christians to think more theologically about cities and the redemptive possibilities therein. He explores the scriptural significance of cities and seeks to demonstrate why we must care about their nature and purpose. A member of the Congress for the New Urbanism, Jacobsen deftly explains the various concepts and ideas associated with the movement, which harks back to Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities.* Among other things, Jacobsen cites the disastrous "urban renewal" projects that the federal government helped fund in the post-World War II era as an example of what not to do when it comes to city planning. He laments that "not

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only is our population becoming increasingly transitory, making it difficult to develop a history with a place, more and more geographical locations are becoming standardized and are losing any sense of place." All the same, Jacobsen does not counsel despair, but sets forth creative, yet realistic, prescriptions in order to refurbish community life on a more humane scale.

—Jeff McAlister

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AN UNFINISHED LIFE: JOHN F. KENNEDY, 1917-1963. By ROBERT DALLEK. *Little Brown. 837 pp. $30.*

The world was young and all things seemed possible. John XXIII had called a council to open the windows of the Church to the world, and of the world to the Church. From Montgomery, Alabama, there was raised up a young Moses to lead the country to the promised land of racial justice. And, for people beyond numbering here and around the globe, an urbane, eloquent, witty, and handsome young man had assumed the helm of a free world suddenly unafraid and daring to dream again. That, at least, is how the time is still remembered by many. For them, it almost defies belief that, had he lived, JFK would now be eighty-six years old. The word is that the distinguished historian Robert Dallek was expected to produce another celebration of the shining moment that was Camelot. That, presumably, is why the keepers of the flame gave him unprecedented access to carefully guarded archives. If that is the case, they must now rue their decision. Others have put severe dents in the JFK legend, notably Seymour Hersh in *The Dark Side of Camelot* and Thomas Reeves in *A Question of Character*. Dallek adds, in great detail, the disturbing facts about Kennedy's lifelong health problems, which had been largely concealed by a campaign of mendacity that continued decades after his death in Dallas. As President, he was being injected, and injecting himself, with a wild concoction of drugs, and none of the doctors involved had control of his medical regimen. The reckless philandering—widely known at the time but not reported—is also cast in a new light, with White House aides serving as procurers of the women daily required to serve Kennedy's compulsions. Bill Clinton's adolescent sexual indulgences in the oval office seem tame by comparison. Here, too, is a Kennedy who was, at the very best, an indifferent Catholic, living until the very end, or so it would seem, in grave sin and undisguised contempt for the Church's teaching. At one point, according to Dallek, he thought of leaving the Church altogether but was restrained by the thought of the political consequences. Some reviewers of *An Unfinished Life* have used the new information about Kennedy's health to highlight his heroic perseverance under painful circumstances, and Dallek, too, stresses his stoic resolve. There was an impressive form of courage, yet the larger picture is that of a spoiled aristocrat who used his personal charm and family money in an unrelenting, and frequently unscrupulous, quest to fulfill his father's ambition to put a son—first Joe, killed in the war, and then Jack—in the White House. The memory of the charm, the wit, and the dashed possibilities is all that remains of a life and a presidency mired in moral corruption. In Robert Dallek's biography, the most severe critics of the JFK mythology have received sad confirmation from an unexpected source.

ANTI-CATHOLICISM IN AMERICA: THE LAST ACCEPTABLE PREJUDICE. By MARK S. MASSA, S.J. *Crossroad. 230 pp. $24.95.*

Coming hard on the heels of Philip Jenkins' *The New Anti-Catholicism* and John McGreevey's *Catholicism and American Freedom*, both of which have been discussed in these pages, one may wonder whether another book on anti-Catholicism is really needed right now. Father Massa of Fordham University does,

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however, provide a fresh angle by telling the story as seen through the framework of theologian David Tracy's well-known argument about Catholicism's analogical imagination. Massa underscores the emphatically Protestant character of America's founding and subsequent culture. Protestantism is dialectical, Catholicism is analogical. In a culture framed by the dialectic of sin vs. grace, law vs. gospel, Bible vs. tradition, individualism vs. communal authority, Catholicism is and possibly must be "the other." The author illustrates evangelical Protestantism by chapters on the anti-Catholic propagandist Jack Chick and once-prominent televangelist Jimmy Swaggart, figures who are more culturally marginal than he allows. There is slight reference to more representative Protestantism, and none at all to those evangelicals engaged in serious theological dialogue with Catholicism. At this point in time, any book on contemporary Catholicism has to deal with the recent scandals, and Massa provides a useful chronology of events in that connection, although his analysis is disappointingly weak. Little attention is paid the culture of dissent within Catholicism, and the treatment of "pedophilia" skirts the major factor of homosexual priests abusing teenage boys. He calls for "more accountability on the part of church leaders in governing their community," but does not say what that might mean. Particular strengths of the book are the defense of Andrew Greeley's challenges to anti-Catholic biases in the social sciences, and an insightful chapter on how Protestant critics of John F. Kennedy's Catholicism in the 1960 election, and Kennedy's response, combined in further excluding religion and explicitly moral discourse from the public square. The opening chapters on the history of anti-Catholicism in America are marvelously succinct summaries accompanied by a thorough and thoughtfully annotated bibliography. The suggestive framing of the story in terms of the conflict between the Protestant dialectical culture and the Catholic analogical culture will, one hopes, be further and more searchingly developed by the author and others.

ON THE COSMIC MYSTERY OF JESUS CHRIST. by MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR. *St. Vladimir's Press. 182 pp. $11.95 paper.*

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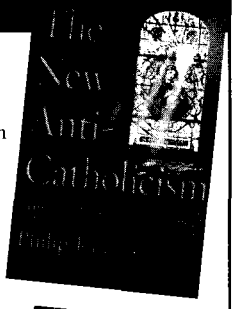

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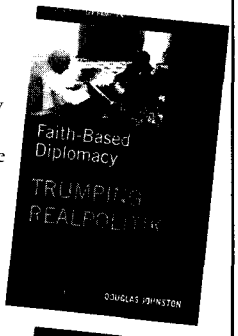

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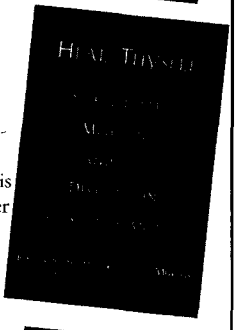

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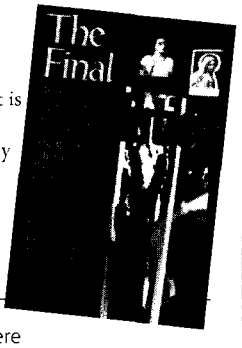

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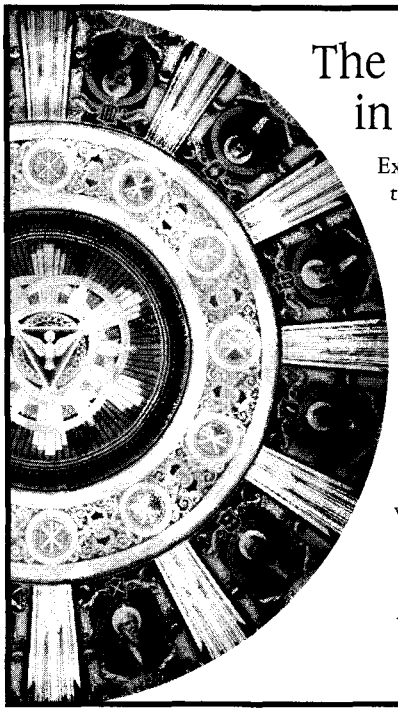
six small books with newly translated, or translated for the first time, writings of Christian fathers such as Ephrem the Syrian, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Irenaeus, Basil the Great, and Gregory of Nyssa. The present volume includes fourteen relatively brief theological reflections and biblical commentaries by Maximus (c. 580-662), translated by Paul Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken, who also supply a splendid thirty-two-page introduction to Maximus' life and thought. Maximus was something of a "bridge" theologian between East and West and, having been exiled from Constantinople, played an important part in trying to revive the Church in North Africa which was under attack from, among other hostile forces, Arab armies. Again imprisoned and horribly mutilated by the authorities in Constantinople, he died a heroic death, earning the title of "Confessor." With great intellectual sophistication, he defended the hypostatic union of the two natures, human and divine, in Christ—or, more precisely, the union that is Jesus Christ. Responding to questions posed by a fellow monk, Thalassius, he refuted Origen's theory regarding preexistent souls and opposed the Monothelite heresy that Christ had but one will. Maximus tirelessly returns to the story line of God's purpose in terms of human being, well-being, and eternal well-being, the last understood as the "deification" already accomplished in Christ. This book, like the series of which it is part, is not likely to make Maximus or the other Fathers popular in any current sense of the term, but it does make a crucially important part of the Christian intellectual tradition accessible to theologically literate readers, and provides critical notes and bibliography of interest also to patristic scholars.



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THE SECULAR REVOLUTION. Edited by CHRISTIAN SMITH. *University of California Press. 484 pp. $24.95 paper.*

Secularization didn't just happen. Those who wanted it to happen, who worked to make it happen, tell us that it just happened. They use terms such as modernization, differentiation, and rationalization in order to make it appear that secularization is an inevitable and inexorable force built into the very processes of history. Christian Smith, the noted sociologist of the University of North Carolina, brings some much needed critical

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intelligence to bear on the usual story line. He and his colleagues offer ten essays on the persons, institutions, and power struggles that advanced the secularization agenda over the last century and more in higher education, mainline Protestantism, medicine, and other professions. Some may accuse Smith et al. of promoting a conspiracy theory, but that is exactly the opposite of what they are doing. They tell the story of agents who could not have been more transparent or explicit about their purposes. *The Secular Revolution* can be read in conjunction with John Sommerville's recent article urging that we study the phenomenon of secularization "from the outside," so to speak ("Secularism at Bay," FT, June/July). Written chiefly for historians and social scientists, this is an important book.

A People Adrift: The Crisis of the Roman Catholic Church in America. By Peter Steinfels. *Simon & Schuster. 376 pp. $26.*

Mr. Steinfels, formerly editor of *Commonweal*, draws on his years of reporting for the *New York Times* in offering his overview of the Catholic situation in America. A self-described liberal, he speaks chiefly to other liberals about what he views as the failures and successes of changes since the Second Vatican Council. Alternative accounts are, regrettably, ignored or derided but nowhere engaged. Steinfels' emphasis is on the institutional and sociological, "rather than," as he puts it, "the profoundly spiritual or theological." A chapter is given to the recent scandals, but he believes the deeper "crisis" of his subtitle is occasioned by the Church's failure to respond adequately to the demands of women, the reality of contraception, the acceptance of homosexuals, and related changes in the culture. He urges what he calls the "American Catholic Church" to be more independent from Rome, and asserts that the Magisterium is teaching falsely about, inter alia, the ordination of women to the priesthood, which he believes will happen "ultimately" but should be implemented cautiously. On the renewal of episcopal leadership, Mr. Steinfels' favored models are the outspokenly liberal Kenneth Untener of Michigan, the now disgraced Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, and, above all, the late Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago. Like embattled socialists who contend that true socialism has yet to be tried, Mr. Steinfels surveys the damages wrought by liberal interpretations of the Council over nearly four decades and recommends as a solution his somewhat tempered version of the same. The book begins and ends with a touchingly nostalgic backward look at what the author views as the unfulfilled promise of the late Cardinal Bernardin and the now languishing Common Ground Initiative, which sought a dialogue between those who affirm and those who ignore or deny Catholic teachings that stand in the way of the further Americanization of Catholicism. *A People Adrift* is a competent and eminently readable, albeit by now very familiar, account of religious, cultural, and institutional changes, written in tones of wan hope for a new and improved liberalism that is capable of resisting what the author sees as the threat posed by the "conservative" alternative. The book may be profitably read as an informed, if highly selective and tendentious, review of the recent history of Catholicism in America. Having set spiritual and theological profundity aside, Mr. Steinfels makes as good a case as probably can be made for defending the weakened hegemony of the liberal status quo supporting an American Catholic Church.

The Coming Catholic Church: How the Faithful are Shaping a New American Catholicism. By David Gibson. *HarperSanFrancisco. 350 pp. $23.95.*

Do not be put off by the subtitle and the publisher's hype that Gibson is, inter alia, championing "a revolution from below." This book is, for the most part, a temperate and thoughtful description of the current state of Catholicism in America, providing also responsible speculation about what the future might hold. Gibson is a veteran journalist who has reported on Catholicism from the Vatican and for various American publications. His is a "liberal" take on most questions, but he

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is determined to be doctrinally orthodox and generally treats with respect views counter to his own. He came into the Church as an adult and, unlike many liberal Catholics, recognizes the dangers of "Protestantizing" changes that could lead to a loss of what is essential and distinctive in Catholicism. For the general reader, he provides useful historical background pertinent to contemporary developments. His treatment of the recent scandals is candid and informative in attending to the very large part played by what Bishop Wilton Gregory has called the "homosexualizing" of the priesthood. He believes a married priesthood is "inevitable," but acknowledges that such a transition must be slow and will not be without the loss of spiritual goods associated with celibacy. Regrettably, he sometimes slips into purveying the scuttlebutt of other reporters, notably against Edward Cardinal Egan of New York and Bishop William Murphy of Long Island. And he greatly overestimates the importance of distinctly American developments for the universal Church. All in all, however, *The Coming Catholic Church* is a knowledgeable and finely written account of the Catholic circumstance in America. David Gibson represents a Catholic liberalism that wants to be faithful to the Church's teaching, recognizes the failures of liberalisms past, and is appropriately modest in its anticipations of the future. His book can be profitably read in tandem with, and in critical contrast with, George Weigel's remarkable *The Courage To Be Catholic.*

WHOSE PROMISED LAND? THE CONTINUING CRISIS OVER ISRAEL AND PALESTINE. By COLIN CHAPMAN. *Baker. 336 pp. $17.99 paper.*

Many years ago Arthur Koestler described the 1917 Balfour Declaration, in which Britain promised a Jewish homeland in Palestine, "as a document in which one nation solemnly promised to a second nation the country of a third nation." Current headlines about the Bush Administration's commitment to a "road map" on the way to a two-state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may prompt readers to try to think anew about the history and nature of that conflict. *Whose Promised Land?* is a promising place to begin such rethinking. Chapman draws on his extensive experience in the region, and gives a careful historical and scriptural reading of the evidence that points toward an answer to his title question. He rejects the Christian Zionist view of a Jewish right to "Greater Israel," the Palestinian view that Israel has no right to exist as a Jewish state, and the fatalist/eschatological view that nothing can be done about the conflict until Jesus returns to sort things out. His final answer is that the land belongs to the Lord, and those who would serve Him must continue to work toward an Israel and Palestine living side by side in security and peace.

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN AMERICA. By WILLIAM R. HUTCHISON. *Yale University Press. 288 pp. $29.95.*

The subtitle is "The Contentious History of a Founding Ideal," and the first problem with this book by a professor of history at Harvard Divinity School is that it is by no means evident, indeed it is highly improbable, that the Founders subscribed to the contentious ideal of what today is meant by pluralism. Like his colleague Diana Eck (see "One Nation Under Many Gods," FT, Public Square, October 2001), Professor Hutchinson, albeit in more tempered manner, holds out the hope for an America as seen through the prism of Harvard Yard. It is not an entirely unattractive vision, but it is an America very different from the confusedly Christian and tribal nation that we are and are likely to be for the foreseeable future.

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ONE DREAM OR TWO? JUSTICE IN AMERICA AND IN THE THOUGHT OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. By NATHAN W. SCHLUETER. *Lexington. 194 pp. $60.*

What would Dr. King have thought? In response to myriad controversies since his death in 1968, innumerable writers—left, right, and whatever—have presumed to speak in King's name. Schlueter goes back to the "I Have a Dream" speech and other defining texts and, placing them in the context of King's life and the issues of the time, has produced an even-handed evaluation of King's thinking about conflicted notions of justice—racial, economic, and political. An additional strength of the book is that the author is as serious about the religious sources of King's thought and life as was King himself.

THE VIRTUES, OR THE EXAMINED LIFE. By ROMANUS CESSARIO. *Continuum. 202 pp. $26.95 paper.*

A distinguished contribution to an international series of "handbooks of Catholic theology," this one by a Dominican teaching at St John's Seminary in Boston. "Handbook" is the right word, and this one covers the basics in a Thomistic understanding of the virtues with sections on, among many other things, "the provisional character of hope," "the gift of the fear of the Lord," "the vices and sins against fortitude," and "infused temperance and Christian humility." Cessario opens with an engaging reflection on "What the Angels See," a perspective on the ecumenically controverted question of the relationship between nature and grace. This is one handbook that theologians and moralists will want to keep at hand.

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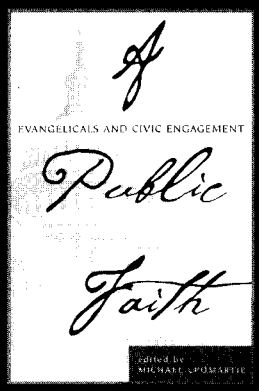

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion, Culture, and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

THE SECULAR CITY REDUX

There are in the press repeated references to "the rapidly growing lay protest movement, Voice of the Faithful." There is indeed such an organization, but, as for "rapidly growing," VOTF doesn't seem to have moved much beyond the thirty to forty thousand range of the old liberal reliables who can always be counted on to sign up for the revolution that they think the Second Vatican Council was supposed to be. Remember that a few years ago most of the same folk launched a campaign to get millions to sign a petition of generalized protest in the hope of matching the several million who subscribed to the "We Are Church" insurgency in Germany and Austria. After extending the time for the campaign several times, they ended up with thirty thousand signatures, tantamount to a couple of large parishes in this country of more than sixty-five million Catholics.

But VOTF plods on, and now some of its leaders believe Voice has found its theological voice in Paul Lakeland, Professor of Religious Studies at Fairfield University, who has just published *The Liberation of the Laity: In Search of an Accountable Church* (Continuum). Scott Appleby of Notre Dame, a liberal of studied moderation, writes in *America* that Lakeland is just what is needed if we are to escape the fate of "our embarrassingly dysfunctional way until the last ounce of credibility and influence of our faith community is squandered." (It is a sure sign that something's up when people speak of the Catholic Church as "our faith community.") Appleby says that, if we have the courage for it, Lakeland's book could become a "landmark." Lakeland's chief point is the familiar one that Christianity is not about religion or the salvation of souls but about affirming and revolutionizing the secular. God planned for Adam and Eve to fall, for, in being expelled from the garden, God "gives them the world." With his typical brio, Lakeland writes, "Paradise is for infants, not for human beings."

Confessing his debt to liberation theology, he says that Catholic laity are "oppressed" and "in chains" under the tyranny of the clergy who enjoy "the most secure lifestyle of anyone in the community, except perhaps for the fabulously wealthy." (In connection with secure lifestyles, he does not mention tenured university professors.) Along the way, he vehemently rejects a bundle of Church teachings which are depicted as the baggage lay people must leave behind if they are really to take over. Perhaps not surprisingly, he ends up with a minimalist, medieval, and post-Tridentine view of priesthood as limited to the cultic functions of presiding at the Eucharist and the sacrament of penance. It is the very view of episcopacy and priesthood, one might note, that Vatican II so explicitly aimed to correct. He endorses a variant of Gallicanism, or nationalism, in which the "American church" would have a synodal structure composed of "bishops, leaders of local communities, ministers of the church, and ministers in the world" who would have the power to act in matters such as abolishing priestly celibacy and ordaining women. Bishops are referred to as "the oligarchy"; "leaders of local communities" are, except for cultic functions, lay people, as are "ministers of the church," while "ministers in the world" includes, as best I understand him, everybody.

Christopher Ruddy writes in *Commonweal*: "Lake-

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land's insistence on the Church's 'worldly' mission leads him to deprecate the centrality of worship. The Eucharist is not simply something that the Church does, however, but what the Church is. In this context, his understanding of worship as an event where believers renew themselves for their worldly mission is somewhat functionalistic. In writing that worship is 'not *the* task or even the most important task' of the Church, Lakeland contradicts Vatican II's statement that the liturgy is the 'summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the source from which all its power flows.'" Ruddy draws attention to a different understanding of Christian faith and life set forth in Robert Louis Wilken's recent book, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought.* Ruddy is right; there could hardly be a sharper contrast in understandings of what it means to be a Christian than that between Wilken and Lakeland.

Lakeland's view of Christian faith brings to mind Obi-Wan Kenobi of *Star Wars* fame: "The key word in this working definition of faith is 'force.' Faith is a primal force. It is not an attitude, or a set of opinions, or an ideology. It is the imagination on the move." There is much more. "If modernity was the time of demythologization, postmodernity is surely the moment for a return to the myth, albeit that—unlike premodernity—we now know it as a myth." "If we ask where . . . the future of faith lies, the smart money is on the power of the people." "The God in whom the whole of Western religion has throughout premodernity and well into modernity placed all its faith is either dead with Hegel, buried with Heine, murdered by Nietzsche, or alive but an abuser." The oppressed of the world—which apparently includes everybody but Catholic clergy—live in a "polemological" world. "Thus the practice of popular religion in such contexts is resistant, transgressive, and utopian. Faith becomes an opening to the utopian space within the polemological space of everyday power relations." "It is plain to me at least that if we are to have a worthwhile future to bequeath to our children, it will only be because we shall find the strength for true political activism and real social change precisely where Gandhi said it would be, at the grassroots."

Ah, yes, "the grassroots." All of us of a certain age remember them well. Lakeland acknowledges his debt to the Baptist theologian, Harvey Cox of Harvard Divinity School. If you enjoyed Cox's book of thirty-eight years ago, *The Secular City*, you will love *The Liberation of the Laity*. In fact, except for the specifically Catholic embellishments, you have already read it.

FT

THE MEANINGS OF APOSTOLIC

The future of ecumenism understood as the quest for visible unity among Christians and their ecclesial communities depends above all on the commitment and directions of the Catholic Church. Which means it depends in significant part on the leadership of Walter Cardinal Kasper, who in 2001 succeeded Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy as president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Kasper was for years a distinguished professor of theology at the University of Tübingen before becoming bishop of the German diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart. Although he has published prolifically in German, his work is not well known in the English-speaking world. One welcomes therefore a collection of essays just published by Crossroad, *Leadership in the Church*, which carries the telling subtitle *How Traditional Roles Can Serve the Christian Community Today*. Kasper has a sympathetic appreciation of "liberal" discontents with church structures, joined to a conviction that a deeper understanding and living out of the apostolic meaning of those structures is the path to renewal, including the renewal of the ecumenical imperative. Thus, at its best, his writing advances the goal of the Second Vatican Council, *aggiornamento* through *ressourcement*—renewal through a reappropriation of the fullness of the tradition.

The Catholic Church and the pontifical council are at the epicenter of ecumenism for many reasons, not least because well over half the Christians in the world are Catholics. John Paul II has repeatedly asserted that the Church's commitment to unity is "irrevocable." Ecumenism is not simply another program or policy; it is inherent in the self-understanding of the Church. As Kasper notes, there are official dialogues with a long list of churches and ecclesial communities: the ancient Oriental churches (Armenians, Copts, Syrians, Ethiopians, Malankara Church, and the Assyrian Church of the East), the Byzantine Orthodox churches (the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Russian Orthodox, the Greek, Serbian, and Romanian Orthodox, et al.), the Anglican communion, the Lutheran and Reformed communions, along with Methodists, Baptists, Mennonites, Adventists, and a wide array of evangelical and Pentecostal communities around the world. The pontifical council has been strongly supportive of the ongoing project known as "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," which began in this country and has inspired similar efforts in Latin America and elsewhere.

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An Interesting Start

Kasper's tenure at the council got off to an interesting—others say controversial—start with a very public argument with Josef Cardinal Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). In fact, the argument was joined before Kasper took up his official duties with the council, but it prompted some to wonder whether, under his leadership, the council would vie with CDF as a parallel or alternative voice of magisterial teaching. That prospect could result in considerable confusion over who speaks for Rome. A 1992 document of CDF stated that the universal Church "in its essential mystery is a reality ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular Church." Kasper published an article criticizing that claim and affirming the priority of the local Church, meaning the bishop and the communities under his leadership. This may seem like a very arcane dispute, but it is not without significant consequences.

In the present book, Kasper offers "a friendly rejoinder" to Ratzinger's critical response to his article. He writes: "My remarks were not primarily dictated by a systematic theological interest. Rather, they were born of my pastoral concerns and experience: as the bishop of a large diocese, I have seen the steady widening of the gulf between the norms of the universal Church and local praxis. . . . Unfortunately, Cardinal Ratzinger has not chosen to engage in dialogue with these pastoral concerns and experiences." Kasper would seem to be retreating from a "systematic theological" argument with Ratzinger, although the original CDF document and his article criticizing it were undoubtedly framed as an exercise in systematic theology. And, indeed, his "friendly rejoinder" is not devoid of theological argument.

For instance, the CDF document, following venerable tradition, sees in the account of Pentecost in the Acts of the Apostles clear evidence of the presence and priority of the universal Church. It says: "The Church is manifested, *temporally*, on the day of Pentecost in the community . . . gathered around Mary and the twelve Apostles, the representatives of the one unique Church and the founders-to-be of the local churches, who have a mission directed to the world: from the first the Church *speaks all languages*." That claim, writes Kasper, "cannot go unchallenged." He says that many exegetes believe that the account in Acts is a "Lukan construction." He cites Michael Theobald's argument that the Pentecost depicted in Acts was but one of many local gatherings that in the course of time became "the Church formed out of all peoples." "According to Theobald, normative character belongs to this process—not only to Luke's story of how the Church began on the first Pentecost feast." If one must choose between a "Lukan construction" and a 'Theobaldian construction," one may be forgiven for inclining to the former in view of its authority as inspired Scripture and its acceptance throughout two millennia of the Church's tradition.

Kasper quickly moves on, however, recognizing that the great question at issue is not to be adjudicated by historical research. The more important issue is the ontological primacy of the local or universal Church. He writes, "Cardinal Ratzinger now makes a surprising move" by arguing from the preexistence of the Church. Kasper then offers what must be described as a somewhat garbled account of Ratzinger's argument, ignoring its foundation in the reality of the one Christ who can have as his body only one (i.e., universal) Church. Kasper cites in support of his argument for the local Church no less an authority than Henri de Lubac, who wrote, "A universal Church that exists antecedently to all the individual churches, or that is conceived as existing in itself independently of the local churches, is merely an abstraction." Antecedence, however, returns us to the historical question, which Kasper recognizes is not the decisive issue, and, as he undoubtedly knows, nobody contends that the universal Church exists "independently" of local churches.

The 1992 document "On Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion" is precisely about the "essential mystery" of the Church as *communio* in the life of the Triune God. Despite his disagreements with the document and with Ratzinger's subsequent statements, Kasper wants it to be understood that he agrees with core affirmations of the document and the Second Vatican Council on which it draws. For instance, he agrees that, as the Council said, the Church of Jesus Christ "subsists" in the Catholic Church, meaning that, as he puts it, "despite all the weakness of the Roman Catholic Church, God's faithfulness preserves the one Church in it: this is the concrete location of the one Church." As for the universal and local Church, he says that each "includes" the other, that they "inhere" in each other, that their relationship "is one of co-penetration or circumincession," of "mutual indwelling and correlation," and so forth. He ends up, however, by speaking of "a balanced relationship between the universal Church and the local Church." One may wonder how the theological concepts of co-penetration and mutual indwelling fit with the language about a "balanced relationship." To speak of a balanced relationship suggests a connection between two distinct institutions; in this case Rome (representing the universal

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Church) and the bishop (representing the local Church). Such language is less theological than practical and church-political. Perhaps it is fair to infer that, in Kasper's view, Ratzinger's seemingly theological argument is really an argument in the service of the jurisdictional primacy of Rome. That may help explain what he means when says he is writing out of his pastoral concerns about "the steady widening of the gulf between the norms of the universal Church and local praxis."

Authority Proper and Necessary

Kasper writes, "The bishop is not a delegate of the pope, but one commissioned by Jesus Christ with a proper responsibility of his own . . . which is rooted in the sacramental order. He must have all the authority necessary for the governance of his diocese. All this is the unambiguous teaching of the last council." That is no doubt the teaching, but it does not eliminate a measure of ambiguity and room for disagreement as to what authority is proper and necessary. The relationship between the Petrine ministry exercised by Rome and the authority of local, and also national, churches has for centuries been much disputed, with the practical authority of Rome waxing and waning according to political and cultural currents both ecclesiastical and secular. Cardinal Kasper leaves no doubt about his reading of the present moment: "In the aftermath of the council, centralist tendencies have regained their strength." He adds that "it would be unjust to attribute this only to the curia's greed for power." The "only" is worthy of note, remembering that this "friendly rejoinder" was written after Kasper himself became a member of the papal curia.

Commenting on *Leadership in the Church*, Avery Cardinal Dulles says of Kasper, "Even theologians who might differ from some of his conclusions will be impressed by the strength of his arguments." Dulles has written extensively on the increasing rather than decreasing importance of authoritative coordination by Peter in view of of the fissiparous dynamics of cultural differences and communications technologies in a time of putative globalization. His would seem to be a very different reading of the "balancing" required between the universal, on the one hand, and the local or national, on the other. He and many others would no doubt agree with Kasper when the latter says, "In many cases, one could go so far as to speak of a mental and practical schism." The difference is over what should be done about that schism. Kasper writes, "Many laypersons and priests can no longer understand universal church regulations and simply ignore them. This applies both to ethical issues and to questions of sacramental and ecumenical praxis such as the admission of divorced and remarried persons to communion or the offer of eucharistic hospitality to non-Catholics." "A solution is possible," he writes, "only if the bishop has a certain freedom of action in his application of universal church norms. . . . Obviously, no compromise is possible on questions of the faith. . . . But in addition to the immutable doctrines of faith and morals, there is a wide sphere of ecclesiastical discipline that does indeed have a more or less close connection with the truths of the faith, but is in principle open to change."

Such generalities are, for the most part, unexceptionable. One may ask, however, whether it is the case that laity and priests do not understand universal "regulations" or whether, more commonly, they disagree with them and therefore ignore them. And generalities tend toward particularities. It is not easy to see how either truth or unity would be served if different bishops had the authority to teach and practice in contradiction to one another with respect to "ethical issues" or, for instance, the admission of non-Catholics to the Eucharist. One assumes that, in referring to ethical issues, Cardinal Kasper does not have in mind questions such as abortion or the blessing of same-sex unions, but he does not say. In recent years, Rome felt it necessary to challenge what it viewed as the German bishops' dubious cooperation with the abortion regime by certifying that women seeking abortions had received spiritual counseling. In any event, Kasper's observations about the connection between faith and morals would appear to be somewhat at variance with John Paul II's repeated insistence that moral theology is theology and that social doctrine is doctrine, as well as Ratzinger's writings on moral teaching as an integral part of "the structure of faith."

The Bishop at the Center

Much of the present book is devoted to ministerial orders, with an essay on the diaconate and several extended discussions on the episcopal office and the meaning of apostolic succession. It has been observed frequently that Vatican II had relatively little to say about the priestly office, and that is true also of Kasper's reflections. Prior to the council, the diaconate was generally a transitional office on the way to priestly ordination. Moreover, the bishop was typically viewed as a priest who has been promoted to the jurisdictional office of supervising other priests. In short, the presbyteral priesthood

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was at the center of the sacramental understanding of ministerial order. The council, says Kasper, viewed the permanent diaconate "as an autonomous grade of the sacrament of orders." Deacons are not substitutes for priests or simply helpers of priests. Rather, "deacons are immediately subordinate to the bishop," to which he adds, "naturally, this entails fraternal collaboration with the priests who likewise share in his ministry." The bishop, rather than the priest, is now at the center.

The essential apostolic office is that of the bishop, an office intimately associated with the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. Kasper quotes Augustine: *Christus est qui praedicat, qui baptizat, qui consecrat*—in the actions of the bishop, it is Christ who preaches, baptizes, and consecrates. Jerome held that ordination to the episcopate is not a sacrament and, under the influence of Peter Lombard, most medieval theologians agreed. "This view," writes Kasper, "was definitively superseded only by the Second Vatican Council, which taught that episcopal consecration must be understood as the plenitude of the sacrament of orders." In fact, a bishop today is not consecrated but ordained. Kasper writes, "The bishop is wholly and definitively commissioned as pastor for his flock, whereas the priest is charged by the bishop with service in particular and limited pastoral tasks for one period of time." In this sharply subordinated view of the priest, he does not address the problem posed by what might be called itinerant bishops on their way to being "promoted" to larger and "more important" sees, leaving the priest as the more permanent shepherd of a particular flock.

"A bishop must not polarize," he writes, "since his task is to realize the peace of the Church. His is the ministry of unity and peace." This generalization, too, is not without problems. Surely the faithful teaching of the truth will sometimes have the effect of "polarizing" those who oppose the truth. One thinks, for instance, of the frequently tumultuous ministry of St. Augustine. In addition, with respect to the universal Church, Kasper views the papal "ministry of unity and peace" as an instance of unwelcome centralization. Indeed, in discussing the "schism" between Rome and the local Church, he suggests that the bishop is obliged to represent the concerns of priests and laity over against centralized authority. In this connection, or so it would seem, the bishop may be, and perhaps must be, a polarizing figure. While, as he says, the local bishop is, sacramentally speaking, as much a bishop as is the bishop of Rome, it does not follow that the bishop is, jurisdictionally speaking, a pope in his own diocese.

"People of God"

The "traditional roles" referred to in Kasper's subtitle are in the service of the sacramental integrity of the Church. There is scarcely an aspect of the council's teaching, he says, that has been more misunderstood than the understanding of the Church as the "people of God." The theological reality of the people of God (*laos tou Theou*) has been confused with the political idea of the demos, and "has led to demands for the democratization of the Church." Greater participation is one thing, but the push for democratization "is often motivated by the ideological desire to reduce the irreducible distinction between the various charisms, offices, and ministries." Such distinction was not a later accretion compromising the "equality" of the earliest Church. Kasper writes, "There was never any initial period without ministries: these are as old as the Church itself, and they have been conferred by the laying on of hands since the apostolic age."

"Community leadership in the theological sense," he writes, "is possible only for one who is ordained, since it cannot be divorced from the celebration of the Eucharist. Such a dichotomy would reduce community leadership to a purely functional service, thus reintroducing the fatal separation between *ordo* and *iurisdictio* and reversing one of the most important developments of Vatican II." Kasper challenges a practice that is taking hold in some dioceses also in this country, that of appointing lay people as "pastoral assistants" who act as de facto pastors, doing everything but presiding at the Eucharist. The result is "an official unordained ministry in the Church," and that "puts the basic sacramental structure of the Church at risk."

The sacramental structure of the Church is required for fidelity to the apostolic order that has been from the beginning, and the bishop, who is successor to the apostles, is at the center of that order. The bishops "possess in plenitude this apostolic ministry in the full sense of the term; priests share in this mission of the bishops and are called their collaborators, helpers, and instruments, as well as their sons, brothers, and friends. They are to represent the bishop in the local community and make him present there." That understanding, appealing to the teaching of the council, has in some cases led to a downgrading of the priesthood. During the recent scandals in this country, for instance, one bishop went so far as to claim that his priests were "independent contractors," which would seem to come pretty close to saying they are hired hands. From Kasper's discussion of the "plenitude" of ministry possessed by bishops, one might infer a distinct deficiency in the ministry of one who is "merely" a priest.

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The Real Presence of the Bishop

Recently a priest who had served for years as an official in the chancery office was ordained an auxiliary bishop. "At last," he declared, "I am fully a priest." It might have been somewhat jarring if he had said, "At last, I am a bishop," although it seems that that, in effect, is what he meant. There may be a shortage of priests, but there is no shortage of priests who would like to be bishops. That this auxiliary bishop at his chancery desk is more fully a priest than the parish pastor faithfully caring for the people of God seems counterintuitive. There is a sense in which it is no doubt right to say that priests "represent the bishop in the local community and make him present there." Much more important, and not in contradiction, the priest represents Christ and makes him present there. The traditional language of the Church is that the priest acts *in persona Christi*, not *in persona episcopi*. Kasper is insistent that the bishop of the local Church is not a delegate of the pope. So also the priest of the community within the local Church is not adequately described as the delegate of the bishop.

Christus est qui praedicat, qui baptizat, qui consecrat. That is as true of the actions of a bishop as of a pope, and as true of a priest as of a bishop. In preaching and baptizing, it is as true of a deacon, and, in the case of emergency baptism, as true of any lay person. Kasper is rightly concerned for the integrity of the total Church in its apostolic structure, and to that end he contends for the dignity of the episcopal office in relation to the Petrine ministry, which is to strengthen and not undercut the brethren (Luke 22). However, the episcopal office, including the Petrine ministry, along with all the curial apparatus and thousands of chancery officialdoms is there for one purpose: to assure continuing obedience to the command of Jesus, "Do this in memory of me." The Church exists for and from the preaching of the Word and the doing of the sacramental things, with the Eucharist as the very "source and summit" of her life. That is the truth so powerfully underscored by John Paul's most recent encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*—the Church of the Eucharist. The priest at the altar may, as Kasper says, make the bishop present, but that is relatively uninteresting in comparison with the presence of Christ.

It may be that Catholic piety regarding the dignity and power of the priest has sometimes been exaggerated. Graham Greene's whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory* who can, despite his many failings, "put God on the tongues of men" is dismissed by some as an outmoded "mystique of the priesthood." Correctly understood, however, it is not a matter of mystique but of the deepest mystery of Christ keeping his promise, of what St. Paul calls the treasure in earthen vessels. A humble priest saying Mass with the poor in a slum of Mexico City effects the same mystery as does the cardinal archbishop in his cathedral or the pope in the basilica of St. Peter's. It is finally Christ who both effects and is the mystery. Kasper knows this. He writes, "Just as Jesus Christ is the primary celebrant of the sacraments, so he is also the primary and the real teacher and shepherd in the Church. This is why the Tübingen school spoke of Jesus Christ's 'handing on of himself' (*Selbstüberlieferung*) in the Holy Spirit." Precisely. Yet, in correcting what he views as a distorted understanding of ministry derived from an exaggerated idea of the papal office, he appears to propose an exaggerated idea of the episcopal office. As a result, the central action of what Christ does when priest and people are gathered to do this in memory of him is, no doubt inadvertently, obscured. It is for the sake of that action and that mystery that the entire structure and apostolic order of the Church finds its necessary reason for being. (Kasper's argument also neglects the ways in which the Petrine ministry serves as a court of appeal for priests and laity suffering under tyrannical bishops. It is not only popes who can abuse their authority. But that is a subject for another time.)

When Ministry is Apostolic

Of particular pertinence to his ecumenical task are Kasper's reflections on the meaning of apostolic succession in ministry. "This link between the apostolic tradition and the succession is the consequence of understanding the Church and its ministries as a sacrament, i.e., a sign and instrument of salvation: succession in the ministry is understood as a sign and instrument of the *res*, namely, the transmission of the gospel. Apostolicity in the sense of historical continuity serves to ensure apostolicity in the sense of the substantial identity of the apostolic message." The idea of apostolic succession changed in the late middle ages, he says, when "the Church was increasingly understood only as a legal structure, where ministerial authority was no longer a sacramental *repraesentatio* brought about by the Spirit, but a *potestas* bestowed on the individual office-holder as his personal possession." He cites instances in which priests served as bishops without episcopal ordination, acting only with the *potestas* bestowed by the jurisdictional authority of Rome.

As valuable as it is to highlight the connection between apostolic succession and apostolic message, along with the primarily sacramental rather than juridical nature of the episcopal office, interesting questions are raised by other statements. Of the apos-

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tolic succession Kasper says, "This is not a succession in the linear sense, where one office-bearer follows another; rather, new members are co-opted and integrated into the apostolic college with its mission that is carried on from age to age." Or again, "When a bishop enters the apostolic succession, he does not receive some private channel (or 'pipeline') connecting him to the apostles. Rather, he enters the fellowship of bishops. The individual bishop is a successor of the apostles, not thanks to an unbroken chain going back from his predecessors to one of the apostles, but because he is in communion with the entire *ordo episcoporum*, which as a whole is the successor of the apostolic college and of the apostles' mission."

The reference to a "pipeline" is, of course, pejorative hyperbole and is not to be pressed. It is worth asking, however, how Kasper's construal of succession fits with that set forth in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "The Church continues to be taught, sanctified, and guided by the apostles until Christ's return through their successors in pastoral office: the college of bishops, assisted by priests, in union with the successor to Peter, the Church's supreme pastor." John Paul quotes that passage in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* and adds this explanation: "Succession to the apostles in the pastoral mission necessarily entails the sacrament of holy orders, that is, the uninterrupted sequence from the very beginning of valid episcopal ordinations. This succession is essential for the Church to exist in a proper and full sense." Kasper's idea of succession may not be in conflict with that, but it is different. Not incidentally, typically downplayed or unmentioned in his discussion of the question is the necessity of communion with Peter. With respect to both the meaning of succession and the need for communion with Peter, Kasper no doubt has ecumenical considerations in mind.

Kasper is keenly alert to Protestant sensibilities, and indeed can sound very Protestant. For example: "The authority of the Church's ministry reaches only as far as the gospel—hence, we may say that we do not believe in the Church, but in God; we believe in the Church only to the extent that it proclaims the word of God. We follow church leaders only to the extent that they themselves follow Christ. . . . Some situations oblige one to obey God and one's conscience rather than the leaders of the Church. Indeed, one may even be obliged to accept excommunication rather than act against one's own conscience." Later on, however, Kasper speaks in what seems to be a different and more Catholic voice. "The Second Vatican Council does indeed affirm that the Magisterium is not above the Word, but is at the service of the Word; but it does not speak of a polarity between the gospel and the Church in such a way that Scripture would exercise a critical function vis-à-vis the Church and the tradition. On the contrary, the council declares that the Church does not derive its certainty about revelation only from Scripture, and it emphasizes the inherent unity and interrelation between tradition, Scripture, and Magisterium." The reader may well experience a certain confusion at this point. If the Scripture or the gospel does not exercise a "critical function" in relation to Church and tradition, how could one know to what extent the Church is proclaiming the word of God? At several points in these essays one wishes for a more connected treatment of the "inherent unity and interrelation" of Scripture, tradition, Magisterium, and conscience.

It is evident, however, that Kasper does believe in the Church, and without the conventionally Protestant qualifications. In fact, it is precisely on this point that he sees the fundamental divergence between Protestant and Catholic. The Protestant Reformers, he says, dismantled the inherent connection between *traditio* and *successio*, between the gospel and the historic reality of the Church, and did so not only in this instance or that but as a matter of principle. "This decision by the Reformers concerns not one isolated partial problem, but the total sacramental view of the Church, i.e., the question whether the Church's visible elements are sacraments and signs of its spiritual essence, which can be perceived only in faith." Luther and Calvin did not propose a completely hidden, invisible, or platonic Church. "Unlike the enthusiastic groups, they clearly recognized in word and sacrament, and in ecclesial ministries, visible elements in the Church. But this does not amount to the affirmation that the salvation bestowed by God once and for all is mediated *through* the Church. Accordingly, the primary break was not caused by an interruption of the chain of succession, but by a new understanding of the relationship between the Church and the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ."

Friedrich Schleiermacher was the father of nineteenth century liberal Protestant theology, and Kasper cites his claim that Protestantism "makes the relationship of the individual to the Church dependent on his relationship to Christ," whereas Catholicism "makes the relationship of the individual to Christ dependent on his relationship to the Church." That formulation, says Kasper, may be somewhat exaggerated but it "points in the right direction." He notes that Protestant thinkers today are not agreed on whether the denial of the sacramental nature of the Church arose out of an emergency situation in the sixteenth century and has lasted to the present day, or whether it is foundational and constitutive for the Protestant construal

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of the Christian reality. Kasper's way of putting the matter brings to mind Ratzinger's assertion that the crucial difference between Catholic and Protestant is that, for the Catholic, faith in Christ and faith in the Church is one act of faith, whereas, for the Protestant, faith in the Church is a second act of faith, if it is thought to be necessary or even legitimate. In a similar vein, I have written elsewhere about "ecclesial" and "non-ecclesial" faith in Christ.

Upping the Ante

In this context, Kasper notes that ecumenism necessarily engages disagreements on various doctrines and practices, and asks whether such disagreements do or should divide the churches. Before we can make decisions about differences and imperfect agreements, however, "We must first agree about what the Church is and what church unity requires." The conclusion logically follows: "This is why a discussion of ecclesiology is the most important task on the agenda of future ecumenical dialogue." Some interlocutors in dialogue may well complain that Kasper is upping the ecumenical ante. On some formulations of doctrine, Kasper appears to be more flexible (others might say liberal) than their presentation in statements of the Magisterium. That would appear to be the case with respect to, for instance, apostolic succession in ministry. But it avails little if we reach agreement on this doctrine or that but are in fundamental disagreement about the sacramental nature of the Church in inseparable unity with Christ and the salvation he bestows. That is why ecclesiology must be the great subject if ecumenism is to have a promising future.

Kasper writes, "What is the goal of the ecumenical pilgrimage, and what are the next steps? The Catholic answer is clear: unity in faith, in the sacraments, and in ecclesial ministries." That is an answer, he notes, that is shared with the Orthodox, both believing that eucharistic and ecclesial fellowship belong together. Implicit in that answer is the understanding that eucharistic fellowship without unity in faith and ministry would be the end of ecumenism. That understanding is made more explicit in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (see "Getting Along at the Altar," Public Square, October). Here again, one misses in Kasper's formulations a clear reference to the Petrine ministry, a reference so consistently prominent in magisterial statements such as the great encyclical on Christian unity, *Ut Unum Sint* (That They May be One). What constitutes unity among Catholics and what constitutes the unity with other Christians for which we pray is being in communion with a bishop who is in communion with the bishop of Rome, the successor to Peter.

"Apostolicity in the sense of succession in the episcopal ministry," Kasper writes, "can be communicated only by a church like the Catholic Church, which itself possesses this ministry: the *ecclesia apostolica* subsists in the Catholic Church." He immediately adds that this "does not reduce ecumenism to a one-way street or a mere 'return to the fold.'" Other communions have "many substantial apostolic elements" and, when Protestants "enter the apostolic succession," the catholicity of that succession will be realized "in a fuller manner." This prospect is not to be achieved by our programs and schedules but entails an eschatological hope. "The fullness of apostolicity and catholicity will be completely manifest only at the end of time." Along the way, we encounter difficulties and resistance. "It takes more than a single day to fill in trenches that have divided people for centuries; nor can one simply hop over them, since no church can allow itself to deny the tradition and the faith of its fathers and mothers." Perhaps "deny" is not the right word, but in the course of ecumenical development it would seem that others will have to overcome those elements of their tradition that precluded unity with the Catholic Church, just as the Catholic Church has overcome her earlier rejection of the authentically Christian and ecclesial elements in other communions.

Ecumenical Crisis

In August 2000, CDF issued the document *Dominus Iesus*, which occasioned considerable controversy and led some to speak of a "crisis" in ecumenism. Many non-Catholics, says Kasper, were "disappointed and hurt by this declaration—and this has hurt me too, since the sadness and pain of my friends makes me sad and pained." He calls the document "unnecessarily sharp and harsh." Kasper's public criticism of *Dominus Iesus* was not well received by some curial colleagues who insist that he participated in the writing and signed off on the final statement. Protestants were offended by the document's assertion that their communities are not "Church" in the full sense of the term. In the present book, Kasper responds in a manner almost identical to the response of Cardinal Ratzinger. Kasper writes: "*Dominus Iesus* does not in fact deny that these bodies are 'churches.' It says only that they are not churches in the sense in which the Catholic Church understands itself to be 'Church,' and this is surely undeniable! In terms of their own ecclesiology, they have no desire whatever to be a church like the Catholic Church. They are a different type of 'church.' They do not possess the episcopal ministry in the historic succession, nor the Petrine ministry; but for us Catholics, both these elements are essential." It should

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also be noted that some Protestants, such as the distinguished Baptist theologian Timothy George, warmly welcomed *Dominus Iesus* as a powerfully orthodox statement of the gospel and a Christ-centered reflection on the unity that Our Lord wills for his disciples, while noting that the document also candidly addresses perduring obstacles to the realization of that unity.

Kasper cites a statement by the Protestant church in Germany, issued a year after *Dominus Iesus* and titled *Church Fellowship in Protestant Understanding*. The statement declared, "Protestants must oppose the Catholic position on the necessity and form of the 'Petrine ministry' and the primacy of the pope, the understanding of apostolic succession, the refusal to admit women to the ordained ministry, and not least the role of canon law in the Roman Catholic Church." Kasper comments: "This formulation is so harsh, so devoid of nuances and uninterested in the outcome of ecumenical dialogues, that it makes *Dominus Iesus* appear a positive ecumenical text by comparison."

All Christians, Kasper writes, now face a new circumstance in which many of the old questions, both those that united and those that divided Christians, are largely irrelevant. For instance, the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by Lutherans and Catholics was a great ecumenical achievement but stirred little public interest. "The questions of the sixteenth century had ceased to interest them." Unlike the time of Luther, "our experience today is no longer the crushing burden of sin, but the absence of any experience of sin. . . . Most people today have no idea what is meant by 'sin,' still less by original sin, redemption through the cross, or the mediation of salvation through the sacraments of the Church. . . . We have all become more or less Deists, no longer asking: 'How can I do what God expects?' but 'How can I do justice to myself and to my own life?'" Kasper's bleak depiction of a thoroughly secularized culture no doubt reflects his own experience of the situation in Germany and Western Europe more generally, which is hardly representative of the larger world. But nobody anywhere should dispute the conclusion he draws: "At the beginning of a new century and a new millennium, the churches face the ecumenical challenge of a new evangelization."

His summary vision of the ecumenical future is compelling: "Dialogue in love is accompanied by dialogue in truth, for love without truth is empty, dishonest, and ultimately deceitful. Ecumenical progress does not mean that we abandon the convictions of our own faith, but rather (as with the doctrine of justification) that we penetrate these more deeply, until we reach the point at which they are compatible with the convictions of the faith of the other church." Others might say that, as we penetrate more deeply, we may discover not compatibility but incompatibilities that cannot be overcome. This is the view of, for instance, those Protestant theologians who speak of a "fundamental difference" with Catholicism along the line of division suggested above by Schleiermacher. I believe, however, that we must agree with Kasper. Truth is one. Christians are locked together in ecumenical dialogue by Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life. If the faith that we are penetrating more deeply is faith in the one Christ, there can, finally, be no incompatibilities requiring divisions in his body, the Church. It is true, "finally" may be a long time; it may be until the end of time. But the continuing ecumenical task is now. Kasper puts it nicely: "There is no ecumenical dialogue without personal conversion and institutional renewal, and we begin not by 'converting' our dialogue partner, but with our own conversion and renewal."

FT

WHAT TO DO WITH BEAUTY AND GRATITUDE

I go back on occasion to *The Stories of John Cheever* and am never disappointed. I know he is supposed to be a minor writer, but the stories, and the novels such as *Falconer* and the two *Wapshot* books, tell us things about post-World War II America that almost nobody else tells as well. Cheever's own life was in many ways a wreck; there were multiple collisions with lechery, alcoholism, and deep funks. But I once read an interview in which he was asked why he went to church. He answered, as best I recall, "I go for the Eucharist. If I didn't, I wouldn't know what to do with my gratitude."

That answer came to mind again as I read an interview with Makoto Fujimura, an artist whom I recently met. He lives with his family over in the TriBeCa district of Manhattan, where he also has his studio. His paintings are awe-full. Highly abstract, to be sure, but visibly tethered to points of reality in a way that makes them, if not representative, certainly not self-indulgent to the point of narcissism, which is the manner of so much contemporary art. (You can get some sense of what I mean by checking him out on the Internet.)

Fujimura is part of a small group of Christian artists in New York who are leading something like a renaissance in work of spiritual consequence. As with Fujimura, some of them have been inspired and sus-

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tained by the remarkable community that is the Church of the Redeemer, led by the Rev. Tim Keller. Presbyterian in orientation, Redeemer meets in midtown, with subgroups elsewhere in the city, and has a well-deserved reputation for reaching young New York achievers with the gospel of Jesus Christ. More on that some other time. Here is part of the interview I mentioned. Fujimura is asked why, by the use of layers of silver and gold foil, his pictures have built into them a process of change. What is the significance of that? He answers:

> It is a very Japanese way of thinking. Rather than trying to make something permanent, they appreciate what has aged. Once you accept the fact that things are not permanent, you approach the ephemeral with a renewed perspective. You can see the permanent and the ephemeral as parallel tracks and can find value in something that is aged, rusting, or decaying . . . Japanese artists have always considered silver, for example, to symbolize our lives and death because it oxidizes over time and tarnishes. Painters deliberately use this oxidizing process to symbolize time itself. The paintings are made so that, as the silver tarnishes, certain aspects of expression are revealed that would not originally have been seen. In the recent Koetsu [a sixteenth century artist] in Philadelphia, many of his paintings were heavily tarnished, but they had this incredible glow to them. He was certainly aware of what was going to happen to those paintings, and here we are four hundred years later looking at works that will continue to evolve over time.

And here is the part of the Fujimura interview that put me in mind of John Cheever's reflection:

> I came to a point where I couldn't justify what I did, although I knew that it fit who I was as a person and the expression I was longing for. Yet when it came down to looking at this sublime grace that was flowing out of my own hands, I didn't know how to justify it. The more I thought about it, the more depressing it became. I knew that when I was making art it was very rich, very real, very refined, and very beautiful. Yet I could not accept that beauty for myself. I knew that inside my heart there was no place to put that kind of beauty. And the more I painted, the more I realized that this schism between what was going on in my heart and what I was able to paint was growing larger. When I finally embraced the faith that there was this presence, this Creator behind the creation, then I had a way to accept this beauty, because I had been accepted by someone even more sublime. There was a purpose behind everything; Christ came two thousand years ago and lived in Palestine. He walked among us; he felt the same dirt we feel today and that to me was an amazing realization. If this beauty had a home then I could accept it for myself as small and frail as I am, because of the work that Christ himself poured out for me. But without him, it was impossible.

I read the other day yet another theologian explaining that people today can make no sense of the Church's language about being justified. To be justified means, among many other things, the discovery that beauty and gratitude, and gratitude for beauty, have a home.

FT

"THIS HAPLESS BENCH"

Last month I commented on the not very secret "secret meeting" between some bishops and a largeish group of progressive laity, including some notable doctrinal dissenters, to discuss the future of the Church. The protest over that meeting resulted in another in early September, this time between the executive committee of the bishops conference and about forty notable champions of Catholic fidelity, of her apostolic structure, teaching, and mission. Participants I've talked with say the meeting may have done some good, but I confess that I thought and think it was a dubious undertaking. It reinforces the line of the "Common Ground Initiative" that there is what might be called an ecclesial symmetry between those who do and those who do not accept the Church's teaching.

The Church is a holy mother and is very patient with those who have difficulties with her teaching, but as Avery Cardinal Dulles put it in "True and False Reform" (FT, August/September): "The only kind of reform that the Church should consider is one based on authentically Christian and Catholic principles. Holy Scripture and Catholic tradition give the necessary parameters. All who propose ecclesial reform should make it clear at the outset that they sincerely embrace these principles. Otherwise they should not be invited to participate in the process." By meeting

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with "the left" and then with "the right," with "liberals" and then with "conservatives," bishops put themselves in the position of brokering the difference between those who reject and those who embrace the principles to which Dulles refers. Worse, bishops look very much like politicians pandering to their several constituencies.

Of course, that is apparently what some bishops mean when they say they are "pastoral" and view their office as a "symbol of unity." Being pastoral, one might suggest, means bearing witness to the fullness of the truth and patiently persuading others to enter into the fullness of the *communio* established by the truth. The Common Ground approach is a convenient way for bishops to evade their responsibility. More than once I've heard a bishop say that he must be doing something right since he is criticized by both the *Wanderer* (on the right) and the *National Catholic Reporter* (on the left). That is self-serving nonsense. Maybe both the *Wanderer* and *NCR* recognize that he is doing something wrong.

Bishops are ordained "to teach, sanctify, and govern." Faithful Catholics earnestly want them to do that, and to do it effectively. To be sure, bishops should listen to everybody. More important, they should clearly speak the mind of the Church. To which a bishop responds that dissenters also reflect the mind of the Church, thus indicating that he either does not understand or does not accept what the Magisterium of the Catholic Church means by the mind of the Church. The crisis in which we are embroiled is, in largest part, attributable to bishops who seem not to understand their responsibilities.

In the September meeting, several participants pressed the bishops on why they do not address the scandal of prominent Catholics, notably politicians, who publicly and persistently oppose the Church's teaching on abortion and yet, to all appearances, remain in untroubled communion with the Church. A bishop responded by citing an instance in which another bishop publicly criticized such a politician, thus winning sympathy for him and he won the election. A prominent business leader who was at the meeting and is active in politics told me, "My heart sank as I listened to him. Here was a bishop telling us that speaking the truth is politically counterproductive, so he will not speak the truth. His job is to be a teacher and shepherd of the flock, damn it, not to be a political tactician. Let him do his job and we'll take care of the politics. That's our job as lay people." He might have cited, although he didn't, the Second Vatican Council on precisely that point.

Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska—who, for his candor, some of his colleagues think unclubbable—has spoken about "this hapless bench of bishops." That is putting it pretty strongly, and there are admirable exceptions, but it is embarrassingly close to the mark. I do not think that most bishops begin to appreciate how many devout Catholics are embarrassed by them, and embarrassed for them.

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Now it seems probable that it's not a question of whether but of how what used to be the Anglican communion will break up. I doubt if, even twenty years ago, anybody dreamed that the shattering would come over the question of homosexuality. But, as Philip Turner explains in this issue, other shatterings prepared the way. "God has once again brought an Easter out of Good Friday," declared an exultant V. Gene Robinson after his election as Bishop of New Hampshire was approved by his episcopal colleagues. It's not the Second Coming, but another Easter is nothing to sniff at. Robinson, who left his wife and children in order to satisfy his sexual needs, addressed the bishops in solemn assembly thusly: "I believe that God gave us the gift of sexuality so that we might express with our bodies the love that's in our hearts. I just need to tell you that I experience that with my partner. In the time that we have, I can't go into all the theology around it, but what I can tell you is that in my relationship with my partner, I am able to express the deep love that's in my heart, and in his unfailing and unquestioning love of me, I experience just a little bit of the kind of never-ending, never-failing love that God has for me. So it's sacramental for me." I just need to tell you that it's probably just as well that he didn't go into all the theology around it.

■ In a *Times* story on how September 11 is still affecting New Yorkers, we are told: "There continues to be a minority of people who avoid the subway, stay away from skyscrapers, sleep fitfully, find new solace in religion." Ah, well, in time they'll overcome such quirkiness. But then there is the statement that they continue to find "new" solace in religion, which implies they found it there before. This may be a more long-term problem.

■ The Archbishop of Boston, Sean O'Malley, has agreed to an $85 million settlement. The lawyers will each get an automatic $750,000 to cover legal fees,

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plus one third of the amount each client gets. The lawyers did all right by themselves. *Forbes* magazine has run blistering articles on how the scandal lawyers have been soliciting for clients, giving fat contributions to the victim organizations, and exploiting "recovered memory" charges that would not stand a moment's scrutiny in court. So what's new? Unlike priests, lawyers had no honorable reputation to lose. That's very unfair, of course, to many conscientious lawyers, but they knew that when they signed up for law school. An interesting twist in the Boston settlement is that the archdiocese entered an iron-clad agreement to keep confidential any counseling files it has on those bringing charges. In some cases, such files might indicate mental instability or a desire to extort money by making false charges. I'm firmly for keeping confidential matters confidential. At the same time, however, the archdiocese is required to reveal all confidential files on priests who are accused, including communications with the papal nuncio and the Holy See. All crimes should be investigated, including the crime of attempted extortion. In Boston, lawyers and an overreaching state attorney general have not limited themselves to crime, real or alleged. They have asserted their intention to run the Church. As for the privacy rights of priests or the right of the Church to govern itself, forget it. But Archbishop O'Malley is probably right in acting quickly to move on from the legal, financial, and media nightmare of the last two years. Addressing the moral, spiritual, and leadership failures that produced the nightmare is work enough for the years ahead. I have known the archbishop for a long time, and he is a very good man. He is intelligent, articulate, orthodox, courageous, and personable. He knows, and his life evinces his knowing, that without holiness ministerial leadership rings hollow. He was the right choice for Boston, and we should join the faithful there in praying that he goes from strength to strength.

■ After some controversy over how it was being done, the National Jewish Population Survey has been released to the general satisfaction of earlier critics. The survey finds that the Jewish population of the U.S. is smaller and older than it was at the last survey ten years ago. There are 5.2 million Jews, a drop of 300,000, despite a large wave of immigrants from the former Soviet Union. That is about 1.8 percent of the population. Forty-seven percent of Jews marry non-Jews, and two-thirds of their children are not being raised as Jews. Before 1970, only 13 percent married non-Jews. Moreover, Jews have a lower birth rate than most Americans. There is always the big question of defining who is a Jew. For purposes of the survey, a Jew is someone who says he is Jewish or has at least one Jewish parent or had a Jewish upbringing and has not converted to another monotheistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam. Forty-six percent of adult Jews belong to a synagogue, and of them 39 percent are Reform, 33 percent Conservative, and 21 percent Orthodox. (The rest belong to smaller and generally more liberal groups.) The median age of Jews is forty-two, while for all other Americans it is thirty-five. While 43 percent of Jews who have no Jewish education marry non-Jews, the figure falls to 23 percent of those who go part-time to an afternoon Hebrew school, and to seven percent of those who attend a full-time school or yeshiva. The 22 percent of American Jews who live in the West are, by all measures, much less Jewishly connected.

■ After the 1968 election, Milton Himmelfarb wrote that Jews live like Episcopalians and vote like Puerto Ricans. Thirty-two years later, in the election of 2000, Jews were still a little ahead of Hispanics in their support for the Democrats. But September 11, 2002 changed many things, says Milton's formidable sister, Gertrude Himmelfarb, in an essay in an important new book, *Religion as a Public Good: Jews and Other Americans on Religion in the Public Square* (Rowan & Littlefield). She writes: "This is the lesson that all of us, Jews and non-Jews, may learn from recent history: that religion is, by and large, a force for good, and that it does not become less good when it emerges from the home and temple and assumes its rightful place in society. Jews in particular have learned a great deal from the Bush Administration and from the President himself. We are no longer so fearful of the rhetoric of religion, which comes naturally to a benign and tolerant President, or, for that matter, of the rhetoric of morality (the 'axis of evil'), which was so appropriate a response to the events of 9/11. Nor are we so fearful of the conservatives, who have understood, as many liberals have not, the intimate relationship between America's War against Terrorism and Israel's. Nor are we so fearful of the evangelicals who have been among Israel's staunchest defenders. The nature of public discourse has changed, and it will inevitably affect our attitudes toward such issues as faith-based initiatives, or prayers in schools, or school vouchers. There are difficult administrative and constitutional problems to address in all of these cases. But however they are resolved, we are already, in a sense, ahead of the game. The Jewish religion is no longer bound by the liberal credo. More and more Jews have begun to recognize that the separation of church and state does not require a comparable separation of religion and society. There may even come a time when Jewish women will no longer feel

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that the 'right of choice' (that is, the unrestricted right of abortion) is their principle article of religious faith. 9/11 has called into question a good many of the old verities and taboos, not only about foreign policy but about domestic and cultural affairs as well." Gertrude Himmelfarb concludes her essay by admitting that she is writing in one of "my more optimistic moments."

■ Because James Wood is an always interesting critic and essayist, because he has written provocatively about his atheistic views, and because authors whom he has criticized are piling on in trashing this his first novel, one approaches *The Book Against God* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) with the hope that it is something really fine. It is much more engaging than some of the critics have allowed. Thomas Bunting, a young man who is permanently procrastinating about his Ph.D. thesis in philosophy in favor of making notes for his own book against God (called BAG), and who is a chronic liar, lives against the presence of his imperiously benign father, a vicar in a village near Durham. Almost everyone in the book is much more attractive than Thomas (who may or may not be James Wood), including his wife Jane, a concert pianist, who takes until page 208 to exclaim in exasperation, "Oh, grow up. Please, Tommy." The authorial voice is distanced from Thomas' (Wood's?) atheistic ramblings, which never rise above Theodicy 101—if God is good and almighty, why is there so much wrong with the world? Thomas is not moved by the persistent suggestion of Jane and others that he and his way of thinking is one of the main things wrong with his part of the world, and the book ends on a note of nostalgic protest that, all arguments notwithstanding, reality should be as innocent and promising as it seemed when he was his father's little boy. That may not sound like much of a story, but there are delightfully comic moments, and an intimation that Tommy might grow up when he dares to say yes to life by acquiescing in Jane's desire for children. I don't know what our reviewer is going to say about the book, but I thought I would sneak in this anticipatory strike of appreciation.

■ For understandable reasons it did not receive much attention but, for the record, the Central Committee of the Geneva-based World Council of Churches (WCC) has called on the UN to investigate Saddam Hussein's crimes in Iraq and any "war crimes" committed by the "occupying powers," including the "illegal resort to war." The WCC news service notes that the resolution "implied that U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair might appropriately be charged with war crimes." Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and a Central Committee member, said he was "deeply grateful" for the resolution because it "gives some understanding of what we're to do next." Others think there is absolutely no telling what the WCC will do next. My own view, I am sorry to say, is that what the WCC will do is sadly predictable. During four decades of the Cold War it pretty much took its marching orders from another Central Committee on the wrong side of freedom, and its anti-American propensities remain unbounded. Which is a pity, because the U.S. needs to lead the world by persuasion, and that requires international interlocutors interested in consultation rather than scoring polemical points. And it is more of a pity when an institution created to advance Christian unity turns itself into an anti-ecumenical agency exacerbating further division along political divides. As I say, the WCC action received slight attention and a spokesman allows it is "not likely" that the UN will follow its advice. On the other hand, these days there is no telling what the UN might do. But that's a pity for another time.

■ "On behalf of His Holiness RAEL, Dr. Brigitte Boisselier, and the sixty thousand Raelians living in eighty-four countries, I want to express our outrage regarding the article by Susan Palmer in the article 'UnRael!' in the Spring 2003 issue of *Religion in the News*." So begins a letter to the editor by Nicole Bertrand, who bears the title "Raelian Bishop." Palmer was reporting on the announcement of the Raelian-related organization Clonaid that it had cloned a human baby, and maybe several. Palmer responds: "I am sorry if the Realians found my article unfair. . . . I personally have found much to admire about the Realians. . . . I am by no means convinced that Baby Eve was the shortsighted hoax the media made it out to be, and expect to receive new insights into the modus operandi of the largest UFO religion in the world when the mystery of the disappearing clones is finally cleared up." Readers often ask why I have not commented on this or that, to which I respond that a journal on religion, culture, and public life cannot take note of everything. So why give space to the modus operandi of the largest UFO religion in the world? Chalk it up to eccentricity. Do you suppose there are larger UFO religions elsewhere?

■ The Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chretien, is a Catholic and strongly supports same-sex marriage. Bishop Fred Henry of Calgary, Alberta, said the PM "doesn't understand what it means to be a good Catholic," and, if he didn't start getting serious, he "risks his eternal salvation." Well, you can imagine.

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Joining in the media outrage was the Minister of Heritage, Sheila Copps, who said she was appalled by the Bishop's statement: "I think that's something that each person reconciles with their own maker and that's not something that you take to the political arena. Every Canadian, regardless of their religion, has to reconcile their beliefs with their god, their Allah, their guru, that's why we live in a country that separates the views of religion from the views of the state." The theological view of the state is that people have their own makers, their own gods, and, even, their own Allahs. Bishop Henry dissents from the state religion and gave offense by suggesting that the PM should make up his mind about whether he wants to continue in the community of dissent that is the Church. Henry's refusal to believe in the many gods of the society puts him in a position not unlike that of the early Christians who were accused of atheism. Canada may be finding its long-sought national identity as the North American social laboratory for experiments in unbounded muddle-headedness.

■ E. Brooks Holifield has written an impressive history, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (Yale University Press, 617 pp., $35). Adam Kirsch, the books critic of the *New York Sun*, finds it an engaging curiosity, noting that "theology now seems halfway between a medieval relic, like alchemy, and a tolerated academic oddity, like classics.... This is a cause for celebration: our principled secularism is part of what makes America the hope of the world. But American theology remains a valuable legacy, and there could be no better introduction to it than *Theology in America*." A legacy, no doubt, but why valuable? In Mr. Kirsch's telling, it is more like Mr. Holifield has interestingly presented the deranged notes that a batty aunt in the attic kept in a shoebox. Admittedly, that "principled secularism" does hint at something like a replacement theology, and talk about "the hope of the world" rises to the level of eschatological promise. Kirsch does allow that, for all of theology's antiquated riddles, thinkers such as Jonathan Edwards did try to resolve them "in more philosophically precise terms." Mr. Kirsch cannot be accused of philosophical precision, or even awareness, which I expect he will take as a compliment.

■ "I believe, all things considered, morally and politically, Pius XII acted appropriately and made the right decisions." So says Sir Martin Gilbert in an extensive interview in *Inside the Vatican*. Gilbert, who is Jewish, is the acclaimed biographer of Winston Churchill, and the most recent of his many books, *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust*, was favorably noted in our August/September issue. In the Yad Vashem memorial in Jerusalem, there are a little over twenty thousand Christian rescuers of Jews who have been given the title, "Righteous Among the Gentiles." These are people—mainly Catholics, if for no other reason than the dominance of Catholicism in the most affected areas of Europe—who risked their lives to save Jews, and Gilbert and other scholars believe that the actual number of rescuers is much higher. Many of the Righteous Gentiles were, along with those they were rescuing, captured and killed. Their names have been lost to history, but not to God. Gilbert says, "It could well be that half a million Jews saved is not an exaggerated figure. We are certainly talking about something on the scale of hundreds of thousands rather than tens of thousands." Pinchas Lapide, another Jewish scholar, estimates that the number of Jews rescued is over 800,000, although many scholars think that figure too high. In any event, Martin, along with others, strongly underscores that the bishops, priests, nuns, and courageous lay people who engaged in rescuing Jews understood that they were acting in accord with Catholic teaching and with the blessing of Pope Pius XII. Gilbert says, "Hundreds of thousands of Jews saved by the entire Catholic Church, under the leadership and with the support of Pope Pius XII, would, to my mind, be absolutely correct." The longest article we have ever published in these pages is Ronald Rychlak's "Goldhagen v. Pius XII" (June/July 2002). That article, in our judgment, is a devastating scholarly refutation of the meretricious polemics of the likes of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, James Carroll, and John Cornwell, who charge Pius XII with indifference, and even with crimes against humanity, during the Holocaust. In the present issue we publish Father Martin Rhonheimer's assessment of less admirable dimensions of Catholic leadership during those times of terror. Yes, there were the rescuers; and yes, the record of Catholic leaders is far better than that of Protestants, especially in Germany; and yes, we must be exceedingly careful in judging those caught in circumstances dramatically different from ours. All that being said, we must also understand the story told by Fr. Rhonheimer. Such understanding is part of the "purification of memory" for which Pope John Paul II has so incessantly called. It is also an essential part of appreciating the timidity, evasions, and rationalizations to which bishops, too, are sometimes prone. Very pertinent to our own historical circumstance, Fr. Rhonheimer's article highlights the need for the Church's voice to be public and explicit in defending innocent human life and

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protesting great moral evils. Many who today blame the Church for being silent then want the Church to be silent now on issues such as abortion. They do not recognize their contradiction, failing to see or refusing to see the evil of the present. Or, if they see it, averting their eyes and muting their protest, as did most, including religious leaders, during those years when moral duty was so glaringly obvious—to us.

■ In August, about one third of the priests of Milwaukee, 163 to be exact, signed a letter to the U.S. conference of bishops. "We urge that from now on celibacy be optional, not mandatory, for candidates for the diocesan Roman Catholic priesthood. . . . We remain aware that—great charism that it is—some future priests will continue to choose celibacy. The primary motive for our urging this change is our pastoral concern that the Catholic Church needs more candidates for the priesthood, so that the Church's sacramental life might continue to flourish." It is an interesting initiative. One might point out that, if celibacy is a great charism, as in a gift, it is not chosen. Of course, one may choose whether or not to accept the gift. The experience of communions that have married clergy is not encouraging. In those communities there are single clergy who are homosexual, and married clergy who declined the gift for fear of being thought homosexual. There are very few celibate clergy. Because the bishops conference is designed to relate to bishops, its president, Bishop Wilton Gregory, responded to the letter in a letter to Archbishop Timothy Dolan of Milwaukee. He pointed out that there are many ways priests can encourage vocations to the priesthood, and that "service to Christ and his people through a celibate priesthood was not an arbitrary imposition by the Church of a particular moment in history, but rather the result of a growing consciousness, already from the earliest centuries of the Church's history, that there was a powerful congruence between priesthood and the celibate example of Christ himself." In the archdiocesan newspaper, Dolan commented on the letter and the media's lionizing of those who signed it: "The reports would have us believe that this letter is revolutionary and novel, requiring 'courage' in a climate where free discussion on this issue is rare. Courage, I would propose, characterizes rather all our priests—those who signed and the 72 percent who did not—who live their celibate chastity with fidelity and joy; courage characterizes our married couples who generously and obediently live out their vows; courage is found in our young people and unmarried adults who follow the teaching of Jesus, the Bible, and the Church on the beautiful virtue of chastity; courage is found in those writers—priests, religious, lay, Catholic and non-Catholic—who defend such a countercultural virtue as celibacy in a world that feels one cannot be happy or whole without sexual gratification." Dolan says he agrees with a priest who told him, "The problem is not that we don't talk about optional celibacy; the problem is that we've talked it to death the last forty years." "This," Dolan adds, "is the time we priests need to be renewing our pledge to celibacy, not questioning it. The problems in the Church today are not caused by the teachings of Jesus and of his Church, but by lack of fidelity to them." Archbishop Dolan, who has been in Milwaukee only a year, leads in a manner that might be described as affably resolute. He understands and effectively communicates the high adventure of fidelity. In short—and in a time, like most times, when such is in short supply—he is a bishop who knows how to bishop.

■ "Is Christ Divided? Dealing with Diversity and Disagreement" is the title of a powerfully suggestive lecture delivered at Catholic University by Father Joseph Komonchak, who has written extensively and knowledgeably on the Second Vatican Council. He traces the ways in which the bishops at the council dealt with agreements and disagreements, resulting in authentic deliberation and, sometimes, deliberate accommodation without compromising the common devotion to speaking the truth. Then there is this noteworthy passage: "There is one problem in the contemporary Church to which I don't think there is a parallel in the experience of Vatican II. At the council the differences I have pointed to were differences within the household of faith, and by faith here I mean the substantive sets of meanings and truths that constitute the Church. The council fathers may have argued fiercely over particular points, including whether a particular matter had been settled by Trent or by the ordinary magisterium; but they were at one in recognizing the constitutive role of doctrine and the importance of defending the faith once delivered to the saints. They took it for granted that the Church is first of all the community of those who believe that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. But I think what Charles Taylor describes as 'the new individualism' is very widespread in our culture and even among Catholics. This is the tendency to reduce religion to one's own very personal, even private spirituality ('following your bliss,' 'being true to your own inner self'), which then becomes the criterion by which to decide what tradition, if any, to follow, what community, if any, to enter, what beliefs to hold, if any. As Taylor argues, this is an

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almost perfect exemplification of William James' definition of religion as 'the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider divine.' Out of this inner reality, James said, 'theologies, philosophies, and ecclesiastical organizations may secondarily grow.' This seems to me different from the often deplored 'cafeteria Catholicism' (although it may be one of its inspirations), that is, picking and choosing among Church teachings; that at least allowed that there were Church teachings. For those whom I am describing it is nearly incomprehensible that one's spirituality might need itself to be tested against any external reality or authority. If this phenomenon is as widespread as Taylor thinks it is, then it may be that many of the disputes about doctrines or worship or morality that so often occupy Catholics are rather missing the point: there are many people claiming to be Catholic who couldn't care less." Komonchak concludes with this fine statement by the French theologian Yves Congar, a statement deserving of attention not only by Catholics and Christians but by all who are determined to settle for nothing less than the truth: "Let our ideas be clear; let us present them in all their rigor. This is a condition of honesty. Let us serve them with all our might. This is the exercise of our courage. But just as we leave a margin on our writing paper for revisions, for corrections, for things not yet found, for the truth for which we can still only hope, let us leave around our ideas the margin of fraternity."

■ Initiatives abound to redress the problem that historian Mark Noll described as "the scandal of the evangelical mind." Here, for instance, is the premier issue of the *Brandywine Review of Faith & International Affairs*. The title refers to the Brandywine Creek near Eastern University in St. Davids, Pennsylvania, where the review is published under the editorship of Robert A. Seiple, former Eastern president and the first U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom. In the statement of purpose Seiple writes: "Against the secularist definition of a tolerant public square, which would have Christians and others check their deepest commitments at the gate, and against the relativist definition, which would have everyone pretend that profound differences do not really mean anything, we advocate for a civil yet robustly pluralistic public square." (I feel sincerely flattered.) Interestingly, in explaining why religion is now receiving more attention in the discussion of international affairs, Seiple highlights not resurgent Islam but "the rise of religious persecution to a prominent place on the human rights agenda." The two factors overlap, of course, but that way of putting it is, well, interesting. The first issue includes an open letter to President Bush signed by about a hundred evangelical Protestant leaders, including editor Seiple. The letter underscores that "the American evangelical community is not a monolithic bloc in full and firm support of present Israeli policy." While the signers "abhor and condemn" the suicide bombings and other acts of violence in the current Palestinian intifada, they write: "We urge you to provide the leadership necessary for peacemaking in the Middle East by vigorously opposing injustice, including the continued unlawful and degrading Israeli settlement movement. The theft of Palestinian land and the destruction of Palestinian homes and fields are surely some of the major causes of the strife that has resulted in terrorism and the loss of so many Israeli and Palestinian lives. The continued Israeli military occupation that daily humiliates ordinary Palestinians is also having disastrous effects on the Israeli soul." So one may safely assume that the new review is not in the Christian Zionist camp. In any event, a publication marked "Volume 1, Number 1" is always bracing evidence of irrepressible hope. (For more information about the *Brandywine Review*, write 1300 Eagle Rd., Eastern University, St. Davids, Pennsylvania 19087 or www.cfia.org)

■ We carried the story of Lieutenant Ryan Berry, a young married man stationed at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota (Daniel P. Maloney, "Sex and the Married Missileer," February 2000). He asked for an exemption from the routine in which he would be alone with a female officer in a small underground bunker for twenty-four to forty-eight hours. This exemption would accommodate, as his request put it, his Catholic belief that he should avoid situations in which he might "develop inappropriate intimacy—even platonic—with a woman who is not his wife." In an older parlance that is known as "an occasion of sin," and Berry asked for permission to avoid it, absent military necessity. For a while, permission was granted, but then a new commander refused and put derogatory statements in Berry's official record, thus destroying his military career. Now, years later and with the help of the Becket Fund, a feisty legal defender of religious freedom, Berry has prevailed and the U.S. military has agreed to remove all derogatory material from his records. A small victory, some might say, but nothing is small in the defense of religious liberty. Chalk up another one for the Becket Fund.

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■ Marian E. Crowe of the University of Notre Dame writes to say that we need not speculate about what Hilaire Belloc might say about the Catholic infidelity scandals. She thinks he said it in his little book, *How the Reformation Happened*. Not all the parallels are fair or accurate, but Belloc's advice on how the Church should have responded to the Protestant challenge in the sixteenth century is, I think, suggestive for our admittedly different circumstance and is by no means limited to the present round of scandals: "Obviously the perfect thing to do in such cases—if there were no conditions of matter, time, and space, if most men were intelligent, pure in motive and heroic, instead of being, as most men are, stupid, corrupt, and cowardly—would be to perform what the Catholic Church herself calls Penance. Obviously the attack upon the Catholic Church would have no success if all the officials thereof in the early sixteenth century had themselves come forward in a body denouncing their own guilt; the pluralities, the lay appropriations, the shame of their worldly lives, the gross scandals of impurity, the oppression of the poor, the exaggeration of mechanical aids to religion, the occasional use of fraud in it, the widespread use of extortion in clerical dues and rents, the chicanery of clerical courts. If the very many church officials who were guilty of evil living had beaten their breasts, repented, and turned anchorite; if the many who were swollen with riches had abandoned them and given them to the poor; if such of the cultured Renaissance prelates as had come to ridicule the Mysteries had suddenly felt the wrath of God—then all would have righted. So fruitful is repentance. But men do not act thus after long habit. It is only after they have felt the consequence of wrongdoing, and often not then, that they admit reality. Repentance, which should precede chastisement, is commonly its consequence."

■ "I guess I'm an existentialist," announced the eighteen-year-old upon discerning no meaning in his life. The meaning of "existentialism" in this and so many other connections is equally obscure. Werner J. Dannhauser takes on George Cotkin's *Existential America* in the pages of the *Weekly Standard*. Of Cotkin he says: "Optimistic and benevolent, he seems to think that since existentialism is a good thing and America is a good thing, existentialism in America must be a very good thing." One problem, says Dannhauser, is that, for Cotkin and many others, existentialism seems to be compatible with almost anything. "One can prove that there can be no Christian existentialists, since existentialism portrays man as floundering in meaningless chaos—and then notice that in real life Christian existentialists abound. Similarly, one can prove there can be no Marxist existentialists, since existentialism insists on man's complete (and dreadful) freedom—only to discover that Marxist existentialists are thick on the ground. At times it seems that anybody who ever experienced a bit of unhappiness and concluded that life is no bowl of cherries qualifies as an existentialist. Cotkin hardly lays this suspicion to rest, granting as he does existentialist legitimacy to Walter Lippmann, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Woody Allen, Paul Newman in *Cool Hand Luke*, and even Abraham Lincoln." In dealing with existentialism, says Dannhauser, there are giants to be wrestled with, but they are given slight attention by Cotkin. Kierkegaard, for instance, "a towering thinker who employed reason's power to expose reason's limits and did so with unmatchable wit and fervor." A fervent Christian, Kierkegaard railed against the church establishment, "thereby becoming the patron saint of all who think they are profound when they say, 'I believe in God but not in organized religion.'" In Dannhauser's judgment, *Existential America* is altogether too much American and too little existential.

■ Thirteen years ago, Sister Mary Rose McGeady was asked by John Cardinal O'Connor to take over Covenant House, which was wracked by sexual and financial scandal and close to going under. Covenant House, established by Father Bruce Ritter, works with street kids, mainly multiply-troubled teenagers who have run away from home. Sister Mary Rose is one formidable woman, and she turned the apostolate around to the point where it now has a budget of nearly $120 million and works with sixty thousand teenagers through centers in twenty-two cities. She joined the Daughters of Charity when she was a teenager and there were 1,300 sisters. Today there are 800, and the average age is sixty-nine. At age seventy-five she says, "I'm on the young half." From the beginning, her work has been with troubled children. She wears her blue habit and veil, and lives very modestly with a group of sisters in Brooklyn, getting up at 5:30 to begin the day with common prayer. Soon she will be moving to the community's house in Albany, New York, situated beside the cemetery where she expects to be buried. But she still has projects in mind, related, of course, to caring for kids in trouble. "I look back on my life and wish I had been holier," she says. "I wish I hadn't fallen asleep at prayers. I wish I had kept all my promises to people. I make more promises than I keep. I wish I could have a wand and mend a child's broken heart." Don't dare mention the idea to her, but it would be no surprise if the time comes when her cause is submitted to the Congregation for Saints.

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■ It must be twenty years ago that the "church growth movement" was the big new thing in American Protestantism. It's not so new anymore, but it goes on and on. Writing in *Nicotine Theological Journal*—which describes itself as "Dedicated to Reformed [meaning Calvinist] Faith and Practice"—Brian Pieters takes note of current evangelical books claiming that "the age of the Church is over." The message is that *Semper Reformanda*, understood as perpetual change, is the imperative for survival-oriented spiritualities devoted to becoming rather than being, and so forth. The Protestant Church as we have known it is doomed to the fate of the dinosaur. Pieters writes: "Reading these words prompts one to wonder: whoever claimed that evangelicals don't believe in evolution? These people are the veriest of Darwinists, only they have cut it out of their biology texts and pasted it into their church growth books. Really, it's all there: dinosaurs, a hostile environment, muting genes, and natural selection (i.e., seekers). Indeed there seems no more firmly held and shared conviction about the Church today than the theory of evolution. Pick up any church growth manual today, and if you are sturdy enough to wade through some bizarre neologisms, you are bound eventually to wind up with this impassioned plea: *Change or die!* " Pieters ponders this from a new book titled *'A' is for Abductive: The Language of the Emerging Church*: "The formula that opens many mysteries of the spiritual universe is $e=mc^3$. E equals the energy of a spiritual awakening. M equals the mass density of knowledge about the Word and world that has become wisdom. C cubed is the constant of the J-factor [editors' note: *the J-factor is Jesus, we think*], which is raised to three dimensions: the depth of trusting faith, the height of connectivity, and the breadth of mission. Every spiritual awakening in Christian history has been the development of this spiritual formula." The authors drive their point home with the three-letter acronym, "COD." Yes, it means, *Change or die!* But then, it's about what one might expect when Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever, evolves into the J-factor.

■ Will those conservatives never stop? Yes, here is another "Volume 1, Number 1." It is called *Family Policy Review*, is published by the Family Research Council, and is not just for policy makers. The first issue combines scholarship and readability in addressing a host of questions, with particular attention to how tax law affects marriage and family life. There is also William Saunders' perceptive review of Hadley Arkes' *Natural Rights and the Right to Choose*, to which too much attention cannot be paid. Saunders understands the significance of Arkes' relentless work on behalf of the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act and, more comprehensively, his argument for "natural rights." Saunders writes: "In asserting a 'right to choose,' abortion proponents undermine the concept of natural right, for they deny a nature that transcends the preferences of others. Law is thus reduced to power: it secures the 'right' of the powerful to define who has rights, even to define who is 'human.' It can no more be 'contained' than could a 'right to own slaves.' It will seep into areas of care of the elderly, the infirm, the handicapped. It has already poisoned the policy discussion where the status of the embryo (prior to implantation, especially) is at stake. By reducing rights to a mere reflection of the preferences of the powerful, a 'right to choose' puts all rights, even those claimed by abortion proponents, at risk, because such rights are always subject to redefinition when power shifts. As we confront and ponder the thirtieth year since *Roe* and *Doe*, *Natural Rights and the Right to Choose* offers us a way out of this blind alley. It points us to a 'rights theory' that is grounded not in power, but in principle. In the national debate about abortion that we must hope will follow passage of the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, this book provides welcome direction." For more information about *Family Policy Review*, contact the Family Research Council at 801 G Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20101 (www.frc.org).

■ Amitai Etzioni, sociologist at George Washington University and founder of the "communitarian movement," has brought out his memoirs, *My Brother's Keeper: A Memoir and a Message* (Rowman & Littlefield, 488 pp., $35). Etzioni is an intellectual entrepreneur of remarkable energy and daunting self-confidence. From the beginning, he jealously guarded and effusively advertised his proprietorship of "the movement." Communitarianism claimed to "leap-frog" the polarities between left and right, thus putting it in the category of the perennial "beyondisms" that typically tilt to the left. Whether or not the movement exercised the influence that Etzioni claims for it—and whether or not, for that matter, it ever was a movement—the basic idea of countering excessive individualism and balancing rights with responsibilities was sound enough. Such countering and balancing will always be necessary. Following through on my earlier work with Peter Berger on "mediating institutions" in social policy, I was an early supporter of Etzioni's effort to turn the argument into a movement. It soon became evident, however, that Etzioni's beyondism meant that the effort would remain safely distanced from the specif-

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ic policy disputes, and not only those related to the abortion controversy, that define the cultural and political conflicts of greatest consequence. Etzioni deserves credit for trying to temper the excesses of liberal individualism, but the communitarian movement—if that is what it was—was more a matter of general disposition exemplified by a personality than a force of intellectual, never mind policy, change in America. Whether, as Etzioni claims, it was a major influence in the development of New Labor in Britain is for others to judge. Making allowances for inflated claims of importance—a problem endemic to the writing of memoirs—*My Brother's Keeper* can be read as a valuable sociological and psychological case study in the quest of intellectuals for public policy relevance in the last part of the twentieth century. More than most in the company of "public intellectuals," Amitai Etzioni championed respect for the wisdom of ordinary Americans, their traditions and habits of decency. If he was overly zealous in protecting the movement and his ownership of it by staying clear of the hard questions, there is no doubt in my mind that "communitarianism" was and is, on balance, a force for good in our public life.

■ You don't have to be Catholic to have a clergy crisis. Jack Wertheimer of Jewish Theological Seminary writes in *Commentary* about "The Rabbi Crisis." The decline in vocations to the priesthood is much discussed. Less well known is the sharp decline in seminarians intending to go into pastoral ministry in the oldline Protestant denominations. Seminarians are much older, in some schools women are in the majority, with a high incidence of divorce, lesbianism, and other factors that were once considered disqualifying. With particular reference to the rabbinate, Wertheimer notes trends contributing to the diminished appeal of the religious calling: "Several other developments contributed to the erosion of the rabbis' status. One was the society-wide assault on authority, of which many rabbis were simultaneously victims and initiators. Catering to the newly modish disdain for formality, rabbis refashioned themselves, trading in their suits for leisure wear, abandoning the title 'Rabbi Cohen' for 'Rabbi Bob,' and dropping formal sermons in favor of free-flowing discussion that might include an exchange of views with congregants. More critically still, many relinquished their roles as authorities in matters of Jewish religious law; to quote Daniel Jeremy Silver . . . by the mid-1980s, rabbis were making 'a virtue of being nonjudgmental.' A blow from a different direction came with the growth of Jewish studies in colleges and universities around the country. In a matter of decades, a whole new cadre of professionals had begun to compete with congregational rabbis as certified interpreters of Jewish texts and culture. In this competition, the title of professor inevitably outranked that of rabbi. To add to the discomfort, younger Jews joining synagogues did not share their parents' and grandparents' awe of the rabbi's learning. Many of them boasted advanced degrees of their own, and felt no need for anyone to mediate between themselves and 'the mysteries' of Western culture." So what might be done? You don't have to be Jewish to recognize the applicability of his answer, mutatis mutandis, to other communities. "Rejecting defeatist advice from among their own colleagues, they would need to gird themselves to combat the present solipsistic moment in American Judaism, reeducating their congregants to think beyond their immediate personal need, their inchoate yearnings for 'spirituality,' and their consumerist notion of religious life. They would need to insist on synagogue ritual focused on communal rather than privatized concerns, and they would need to reorient the synagogue itself as an institution focused on the transcendent needs of the Jewish people. Above all, they would need to take their own role seriously, accepting the burden and the challenge of their calling as individuals who speak with authority not only for themselves but for the Jewish tradition, the Jewish people, and God."

■ Bishop Joseph Sprague heads the Northern Illinois Conference of the 8.3 million-member United Methodist Church. He has, according to those who follow these matters, denied the deity of Christ, the bodily resurrection, the virgin birth, and the atonement. The conference, meeting in June, expressed its deep concern. In fact, it expressed many concerns. What were described as "prophetic" resolutions endorsed boycotts of Tyson's chickens, Kraft macaroni and cheese, and supported the territorial demands of the Palestinians, the land mines treaty, the forswearing of military force against North Korea, increased government efforts to combat global warming, and gay and lesbian relationships as an "expression of God's love." The resolution on the last item urged clergy and Sunday School teachers to "tell it to our children." The concerns about Bishop Sprague were not overlooked. A resolution was resoundingly approved supporting his ministry. Among United Methodist conferences, Northern Illinois is contending for the lead in membership decline. From mainline to oldine to sideline to oblivion.

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■ The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) is an odd organization. Its members include oldline Protestant groups such as the Episcopal, United Methodist, Presbyterian (USA), and United Church of Christ, as well as a number of Jewish and humanist organizations. Its money (about $4 million per year) comes from outfits such as the Ford Foundation. Its focus is on young people and African-Americans. Its purpose is to promote the idea that abortion, including partial-birth abortion, is not sometimes a tragic necessity, as its member churches say, but is a "holy work," and the defense of the unlimited abortion license is, according to RCRC, a holy war. Young people are taught that abortion is a rite of passage to adulthood, and their parents have no right to interfere with their "reproductive choice." In short, RCRC is about as extremist as pro-abortion agitation gets. Now Michael J. Groman and Ann Loar Brooks have written a little book, *Holy Abortion?*, calling all this to the attention of the oldline churches. The purpose of the book is not to convert people to the pro-life position, although that would no doubt be welcome. The purpose is to call these communities to get serious about their own moral and spiritual integrity. As the authors demonstrate, the teachings of these churches are clearly contradicted by the positions advanced by RCRC. *Holy Abortion?* is a simple but compelling appeal for honesty. Perhaps because its bills are being footed by pro-abortion foundations such as Ford, some churches aren't paying attention to what RCRC is doing and saying. They should. It is being said and done in their name. The book is available from wipf*and*stock Publishers, 199 West 8th Ave., Suite 3, Eugene, Oregon 97401 (e-mail orders: orders@wipfandstock.com).

■ Pondering the long reaches of history is conducive to modesty, or at least it should be. What any of us does is such a small part of the whole. Many years ago, when A. M. Rosenthal was executive editor of the *New York Times*, I raised a small question of religious nomenclature which resulted in a change in the paper's style manual. Mr. Rosenthal wrote me a long letter explaining the change and concluded, "You may have the satisfaction of knowing that, in a small but important way, you have changed history." Just think of what that implies about the historical significance of the *Times*, and of Mr. Rosenthal. I don't think I'll have his tribute inscribed on my tombstone. In the fourth century, St. John Chrysostom, still celebrated today as one of the Church's greatest theologian-preachers, wrote that preachers should cultivate the virtue of "contempt for praise." I have not yet mastered that, but am sure he was right. It does not mean that one doesn't appreciate the nice things people say, but one does not preach—or write, or do anything else of consequence—for the sake of the nice things people may say. I have always found fetching one aspect of the "triumph" that the Roman senate would vote for victorious generals. The chariot, drawn by four horses, was wreathed in laurel, and the triumphator was attired like the Capitoline Jupiter in robes of purple and gold. At the head of the procession were the members of the senate, followed by a host of trumpeters, and then the spoils of war, the animal victims destined for ritual sacrifice, and, finally, in chains, the prisoners of the defeated army. In the chariot was a slave who held over the general's head the golden crown of Jupiter and all along the route whispered into his ear, "You, too, are mortal." That's a nice touch. I do not know, but am told by those who claim to know, that in his home the great twentieth-century Swiss theologian Karl Barth had on his staircase wall portraits of Christian thinkers, beginning with Paul and Origen and moving on up through Augustine, Abelard, Bernard, Thomas, Schleiermacher, and other worthies. At the very top was a portrait of Karl Barth. The man had a sense of his place in history. It is not pride, or at least not necessarily so. A friend who is a distinguished philosopher and has had his share of triumphs tells me in a matter-of-fact manner, without a hint of boasting, that a thousand years from now or as long as philosophy is seriously done, "Nobody will be able to bypass my work." I'm profoundly skeptical about such a claim. It's true that we all matter, and matter ultimately. After all, we are assured that even every sparrow that falls is counted, but it is best to count on God alone to do the counting. These reflections on mortality and our part in the world's story are prompted by my reading the entry on Beethoven in the 1960 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* I keep at the cottage in Quebec. That's what I read in the mornings over coffee where I am spared the distraction of newspapers. The long entry is written by the long forgotten Sir Donald Francis Tovey, Professor of Music at the University of Edinburgh, who obviously had a deficient appreciation of Bach. The article ends with this: "It is as certain as anything in the history of art that there will never be a time when Beethoven's work does not occupy the central place in a sound musical mind. When Beethoven is out of fashion, that is because people are afraid of drama and of sublime emotions. And that amounts merely to a fear of life." So there. As the general said to the slave, "Hold the crown steady, and stop that ridiculous whispering."

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■ Here are more Readers of FIRST THINGS (ROFTERS) who are interested in convening discussion circles. If you would like to join an FT discussion group and live in or around the following addresses, please contact the organizers. If you would like to start a group in your area, please send us your contact information.

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Sources: Secular City Redux, Lakeland quotes from *The Liberation of the Laity* and "Does Faith Have a Future?" *Cross Currents*, Spring 2002.

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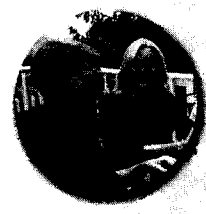

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